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ELEVEN SELECT

SERMONS,

OF THE LATE

Rev. JAMES SAURIN,

ON

VARIOUS IMPORTANT SUBJECTS.

CONCORD:

PRINTED BY GEORGE HOUGH,

FOR CHARLES PEIRCE,

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PREFACE.

THE Reverend *JAMES SAURIN*, the author of the enſuing diſcourſes, was born at Niſmes, a noted city of France, in 1677. His father was a lawyer, eminent for his learning and eloquence, of the proteſtant profeſſion, who, upon the revocation of the edict of Nantz, retired to Geneva, where he ended his days. James removed with him, and was educated under ſome of the moſt learned and pious profeſſors of the age.

Having completed his ſtudies, in 1700 he viſited England, where he reſided nearly five years, and was remarkably acceptable as a preacher among his fellow exiles in the city of London.

"His ſtyle," ſays the tranſlator of his ſermons, the Reverend *Robert Robinſon*, "was pure, unaffected, and eloquent, ſometimes plain, ſometimes flowery; but never improper, as it was always adapted to the audience for whoſe ſake he ſpoke."

In

In 1705, a chaplainſhip to ſome of the nobility at the Hague was offered him, which he accepted. Here he continued till his death. He was conſtantly attended by a very crowded and brilliant aſſembly. He was heard with the utmoſt attention, and his miniſterial labors were abundantly bleſſed by the great Head of the church.

He departed this life, for a better, on the 30th of December, 1730, at the age of 52, ſincerely and univerſally regretted by the people of his charge, and by all, who had the happineſs of an acquaintance with him.

Mr. Saurin's printed ſermons are compriſed in twelve volumes. From thoſe, which have been tranſlated, this ſelection has been carefully made by a gentleman of leiſure, judgment, and taſte.

To thoſe, who have not had opportunity for peruſing the ſermons of this celebrated divine, the following recommendation may not be unacceptable.

Approbation

Approbation of the Walloon Church at Dort, employed by the Synod of Utrecht, to examine the ſermons of Mr. Saurin.

"WE have found nothing in all theſe ſermons, contrary to the doctrine received among us. We have remarked every where, a manly eloquence; a cloſe reaſoning; an imagination, lively and proper, to eſtabliſh the Truth of our holy religion; and to explain, ſubſtantially and elegantly, the doctrines of morality. Accordingly, we believe they will effectually contribute to edify the Church, and to render more and more reſpectable the memory of this worthy ſervant of God; whoſe death, the examination of his works, hath given us a freſh occaſion to lament. We atteſt this to the venerable Synod at Utrecht. In the ſame ſentiments, we ſend the preſent atteſtation to our dear brother, Mr. Dumont, paſtor and profeſſor at Rotterdam, whom the late Mr.

Mr. Saurin appointed, by his will, to take the charge of publishing such of his works as were fit for the press.

Done at the Consistory of the Walloon Church, at Dort, May 20th, 1731, and signed by order of all, by

H. G. Certon, *Pastor.*
S. Comperat, *Pastor.*
Adrian Bruets Jacobz, *Elder.*
John Backris, *Elder.*
John Van Breda, *Deacon.*
Simon Taay Van Campen, *Deac.*"

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LIFE
OF
Rev. JAMES SAURIN.

MR. SAURIN, the father of our author, was an eminent proteſtant lawyer at Niſmes, who, after the repeal of the edict of Nantz, 1685, retired to Geneva. He was conſidered at Geneva as the oracle of the French language, the nature and beauty of which he thoroughly underſtood. He had four ſons, whom he trained up in learning, and who were all ſo remarkably eloquent, that eloquence was ſaid to be hereditary in the family. The Reverend Lewis Saurin, one of the ſons, was afterwards paſtor of a French church in London. Saurin, the father, died at Geneva. James, the author of the following ſermons, was born at Niſmes, in 1677, and went with his father into exile, to Geneva, where he profited very much in learning.

In the ſeventeenth year of his age, 1694, Saurin quitted his ſtudies to go into the army, and made a campaign as a cadet in lord Galloway's company. The next year, 1695, his captain gave him a pair of colours in his regiment, which then ſerved in Piedmont; but the year after, 1696, the duke of Savoy, under whom Saurin ſerved, having made his peace with France, Saurin quitted the profeſſion of arms, for which he was never deſigned, and returned to Geneva to ſtudy.

Geneva was, at that time, the reſidence of ſome of the beſt ſcholars in Europe, who were in the higheſt eſtimation in the republic of letters. Pictet, Lewis Tronchin, and Philip Meſtrezat, were

profeſſors of divinity there; Alphonſo Turretin was profeſſor of ſacred hiſtory; and Chouet, who was afterwards taken from his profeſſorſhip, and admitted into the government of the republic, was profeſſor of natural philoſophy. The other departments were filled with men, equally eminent in their ſeveral profeſſions. Some of them were natives of Geneva, others were exiles from Italy and France, ſeveral were of noble families, and all of them were men of eminent piety. Under theſe great maſters, Saurin became a ſtudent, and particularly applied himſelf to divinity, as he now began to think of devoting himſelf to the miniſtry, 1696. To dedicate one's ſelf to the miniſtry in a wealthy, flouriſhing church, where rich benefices are every day becoming vacant, requires very little virtue, and ſometimes only a ſtrong propenſity to vice; but to chooſe to be a miniſter in ſuch a poor, baniſhed, perſecuted church as that of the French proteſtants, argues a noble contempt of the world, and a ſupreme love to God and to the ſouls of men. Theſe are the beſt teſtimonials, however, of a young miniſter, whoſe profeſſion is, not to enrich, but to *ſave himſelf, and them who hear him.* 1 Tim. iv. 16.

After Mr. Saurin had finiſhed his ſtudies, 1700, he viſited Holland and England. In the firſt he made a very ſhort ſtay; but in the laſt he ſtaid almoſt five years, and preached with great acceptance among his fellow exiles in London. Of his perſon an idea may be formed by the annexed copper-plate, which is ſaid to be a great likeneſs, and for which I am indebted to my ingenious friend Mr. Thomas Holloway. His dreſs was that of the French clergy, the gown and caſſock. His addreſs was perfectly genteel, a happy compound of the affable and the grave, at an equal diſtance from ruſticity and foppery. His voice was ſtrong, clear, and harmonious, and he never

loſt

loſt the management of it. His ſtyle was pure, unaffected, and eloquent, ſometimes plain, and ſometimes flowery; but never improper, as it was always adapted to the audience, for whoſe ſake he ſpoke. An Italian acquaintance of mine, who often heard him at the Hague, tells me, that in the introductions of his ſermons he uſed to deliver himſelf in a tone modeſt and low; in the body of the ſermon, which was adapted to the underſtanding, he was plain, clear, and argumentative, pauſing at the cloſe of each period, that he might diſcover, by the countenances and motions of his hearers, whether they were convinced by his reaſoning; in his addreſſes to the wicked, (and it is a folly to preach as if there were none in our aſſemblies, Mr. Saurin knew mankind too well) he was often ſonorous, but oftener a weeping ſuppliant at their feet. In the one he ſuſtained the authoritative dignity of his office, in the other he expreſſed his Maſter's and his own benevolence to bad men, *praying them in Chriſt's ſtead to be reconciled to God.* 2 Cor. v. 20. In general, adds my friend, his preaching reſembled a plentiful ſhower of dew, ſoftly and imperceptibly inſinuating itſelf into the minds of his numerous hearers, as the dew into the pores of plants, till the whole church was diſſolved, and all in tears under his ſermons. His doctrine was that of the French proteſtants, which, at that time, was moderate calviniſm. He approved of the diſcipline of his own churches, which was preſbyterian. He was an admirable ſcholar, and, which were his higheſt encomiums, he had an unconquerable averſion to ſin, a ſupreme love to God and to the ſouls of men, and a holy unblemiſhed life. Certainly he had ſome faults; but, as I have never heard of any, I can publiſh none.

During his ſtay in England, he married a Miſs Catherine Boyton, in 1703, by whom he had a ſon, named Philip, who ſurvived him; but whether

er he had any more children I know not. Two years after his marriage he returned to Holland, in 1705, where he had a mind to ſettle; but, the paſtoral offices being all full, and meeting with no proſpect of a ſettlement, though his preaching was received with univerſal applauſe, he was preparing to return to England, when a chaplainſhip to ſome of the nobility at the Hague, with a ſtipend, was offered to him. This ſituation exactly ſuited his wiſhes, and he accepted the place.

The Hague, it is ſaid, is the fineſt village in Europe. It is the reſidence of the States General, of ambaſſadors and envoys from other courts, of a great number of nobility and gentry, and of a multitude of French refugees. The princes of Orange have a ſpacious palace here, and the chapel of the palace was given to the refugees for a place of public worſhip; and, it being too ſmall to contain them, it was enlarged by above a half. This French church called him to be one of their paſtors. He accepted the call, and continued in his office till his death. He was conſtantly attended by a very crowded and brilliant audience, was heard with the utmoſt attention and pleaſure, and, what few miniſters can ſay, the effects of his miniſterial labours were ſeen in the holy lives of great numbers of his people.

When the princeſs of Wales, afterward Queen Caroline, paſſed through Holland in her way to England, Mr. Saurin had the honour of paying his reſpects to that illuſtrious lady. Her royal highneſs was pleaſed to ſingle him out from the reſt of the clergy, who were preſent, and to ſay to him, "Do not imagine that, being dazzled with the glory which this revolution ſeems to promiſe me, I have loſt ſight of that God from whom it proceeds. He hath been pleaſed to diſtinguiſh it with ſo many extraordinary marks, that

that I cannot miſtake his divine hand; and, as I conſider this long train of favours as immediately coming from him, to him alone I conſecrate them." It is not aſtoniſhing, that Saurin ſpeaks of condeſcenſion with rapture. They are the kind and chriſtian actions of the governors of a free people, and not the haughty airs of a French tyrant, inſulting his ſlaves, that attach and inflame the hearts of mankind. The hiſtory of this illuſtrious chriſtian queen is not written in blood, and therefore it is always read with tears of grateful joy.

Her royal highneſs was ſo well ſatisfied of Mr. Saurin's merit, that ſoon after her arrival in England ſhe ordered Dr. Boulter, who was preceptor to prince Frederick, the father of his preſent majeſty, to write to Saurin, to draw up a treatiſe on the education of princes. Saurin immediately obeyed the order, and prefixed a dedication to the young princes. The book was never printed; but as it obtained the approbation of the princeſs of Wales, who was an incomparable judge, we may conclude that it was excellent in its kind. This was followed by a handſome preſent from the princeſs to the author.

His moſt conſiderable work was entitled, *Diſcourſes, hiſtorical, critical, and moral, on the moſt memorable events of the old and new teſtament.* This work was undertaken by the deſire of a Dutch merchant, who expended an immenſe ſum in the engraving of a multitude of copper-plates, which adorn the work. It conſiſts of ſix folio volumes. Mr. Saurin died before the third was finiſhed; but Mr. Roques finiſhed the third, and added a fourth on the old teſtament; and Mr. de Beauſobre ſubjoined two on the new teſtament. The whole is replete with very extenſive learning, and well worth the careful peruſal of ſtudents in divinity. The firſt of theſe was

tranſlated into Engliſh by Chamberlayne, ſoon after its firſt publication in French.

Our author's *diſſertation on the expedience of ſometimes diſguiſing the truth*, raiſed a furious clamour againſt him. He does not decide the queſtion; but he ſeems to take the affirmative. This produced a paper war, and his antagoniſts unjuſtly cenſured his morals. The mildneſs of his diſpoſition rendered him a deſirable opponent, for though he was ſure to conquer, yet he ſubdued his adverſary ſo handſomely, that the captive was the better for his defeat. But others did not controvert with ſo much temper. Some wrote againſt him, others for him. At length the ſynod decided the diſpute in his favour.

He publiſhed a ſmall, but valuable piece, *on the ſtate of chriſtianity in France*. It treats of many important points of religion, in controverſy between catholics and proteſtants. There is alſo a ſmall *catechiſm* of his publiſhing, which I think worth the attention of ſuch as educate children in the firſt principles of religion.

There are twelve volumes of his ſermons. Some are dedicated to his majeſty George II. and the king was pleaſed to allow him a handſome penſion. Some to her majeſty Queen Caroline, while ſhe was princeſs of Wales. One to count Waſſanaer, a Dutch nobleman. Two were dedicated to her majeſty, after his deceaſe, by his ſon. Profeſſor Dumont, and Mr. Huſſon, to whom Mr. Saurin left his manuſcripts, publiſhed the reſt, and one volume is dedicated to the counteſs Dowager of Albemarle. The Engliſh ſeem therefore to have a right to the labours of this great man.

Mr. Saurin died at the Hague, on Dec. 30th, 1730, aged 53, moſt ſincerely regretted by all his acquaintances, as well as by his church, who loſt in him a truly primitive chriſtian miniſter,

who

who spent his life in watching over his flock, as one who knew he must give an account.

In regard to this translation, it was first undertaken by the desire of a small circle of private friends, for our mutual edification. If I have suffered my private opinion to be prevailed over by others to print this translation, it is not because I think myself able to give language to Saurin; but because I humbly hope that the sentiments of the author may be conveyed to the reader by it. His sentiments, I think, are, in general, those of the holy scripture, and his manner of treating them well adapted to impress them on the heart. I have endeavoured not to disguise his meaning, though I have not been able to adopt his style; for which defect, though I print them by private subscription, for the use of my friends, on whose candour I depend, yet I do not offer to publish them to the world for the language of Mr. Saurin. I should have been glad to have pleased every subscriber, by inserting those sermons, which were most agreeable to him, had I known which they were; but as this was impossible, I have followed my own judgment, or perhaps exposed my want of it. The first volume aims to secure the doctrine of a *God*, against the attacks of atheists. In the second, we mean to plead for the holy *scriptures* against deists. In the third, we intend to take those sermons, which treat of the *doctrines of christianity*, as we humbly conceive that the new testament is something more than a system of moral philosophy. And the last volume we dedicate to *moral* subjects, because we think christianity a holy religion, productive of moral obedience in all its true disciples. To this second edition a *fifth* volume is added on miscellaneous subjects. May the God of all grace bless the reading of them to the weakening of the dominion of sin, and to the advancement of the kingdom of our blessed Redeemer, Jesus Christ!

SERMONS.

SERMON I.

THE OMNIPRESENCE OF GOD.

PSALM CXXXIX. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art *there: If I make my bed in hell, behold thou* art there. If *I take the wings of the morning,* and *dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me: even the night shall be light about me. Yea the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light* are *both alike* to thee.

COULD I have one wish, to answer my proposed end of preaching to-day with efficacy, christians, it should be to shew you God in this assembly. Moses had such an advantage, no man therefore ever spoke with greater success. He gave the law to the people, in God the legislator's presence. He could say, This law which I give you, proceeds from God: here is his throne, there is his lightning, yonder is his thunder. Accordingly, never were a people more struck with a legislator's voice. Moses had hardly begun to speak, but, at least for that moment, all hearts were united, and all Sinai echoed with one voice, crying, "All that thou hast spoken we will do." Exod. xix. 8.

But

But in vain are our sermons drawn from the sacred sources: in vain do we say to you, *Thus saith the Lord:* you see only a man; you hear only a mortal voice in this pulpit; God hath put his *treasure into earthen vessels,* 2 Cor. iv. 7. and our auditors, estimating the treasure by the meanness of the vessel, instead of supporting the meanness of the vessel for the sake of the treasure, hear us without respect, and, generally, derive no advantage from the ministry.

But were God present in this assembly, could we shew you the Deity amongst you, authorizing our voice by his approbation and presence, and examining with what dispositions you hear his word, which of you, which of you, my brethren, could resist so eminent and so noble a motive?

Christians, this idea is not destitute of reality: God is every where; he is in this church. Vails of flesh and blood prevent your sight of him; these must fall, and you must open the eyes of your spirits, if you would see a *God,* who *is a spirit,* John iv. 24. Hear our prophet; hear his magnificent description of the immensity and omnipresence of God, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

In a text less abundant in riches, we might make some remarks on the terms *spirit* and *presence;* but we will content ourselves at present with indicating what ideas we affix to them, by observing, that by the *spirit* and *presence* of God,

we

we understand God himself. I know, some divines discover great mysteries in these terms, and tell us that there are some passages in scripture where the word *presence* means the second person in the most holy Trinity, and where the term *spirit* is certainly to be understood of the third. But as there are some passages where these terms have not this signification, it is beyond all doubt that this, which we are explaining, is precisely of the latter kind. However, if any dispute our comment, we shall leave them to dispute it; for it would be unjust to consume that time, which is dedicated to the edification of a whole congregation, in refuting a particular opinion. The other expressions in our text, *heaven, hell; the wings of the morning*, a figurative expression, denoting the rapidity of the light in communicating itself from one end of the world to the other; these expressions, I say, need no comment. The *presence* of God, the *spirit* of God, signify then the divine essence; and this assemblage of ideas, *whither shall I go from thy spirit? whither shall I flee from thy presence?* means, that God is immense, and that he is present in every place.

But wherein consists this immensity and omnipresence? If ever a question required developing, this certainly does; not only because it presents to the mind an abstract subject, which does not fall under the observation of the senses, but because many who have treated this matter, (pardon an opinion which does not proceed from a desire of opposing any individual, but only from a love to the truth) many who have handled the subject, have contributed more to perplex, than to explain it. We may observe, in general, that, unless we be wholly unacquainted with the history of the sciences, it is impossible not to acknowledge, that all questions about the nature of spirits, all that are any way related to metaphys-

ics,

ics, were very little understood before the time of that celebrated philosopher, whom God seems to have bestowed on the world to purify reason, as he had some time before raised up others to purify religion.*

What heaps of crude and indigested notions do we find, among the schoolmen, of the immensity of God? One said, God was a point, indivisible indeed, but a point, however, that had the peculiar property of occupying every part of the universe. Another, that God was the place of all beings, the immense extent in which his power had placed them. Another, that his essence was *really* in heaven, but yet, *repletively*, as they express it, in every part of the universe. In short, this truth hath been obscured by the grossest ignorance. Whatever aversion we have to the decisive tone, we will venture to affirm, that people, who talked in this manner of God, had no ideas themselves of what they advanced.

Do not be afraid of our conducting you into these wild mazes; do not imagine that we will busy ourselves in exposing all these notions, for the sake of labouring to refute them. We will content ourselves with giving you some light into the omnipresence of God:

I. By removing those false ideas, which, at first, seem to present themselves to the imagination;

II. By assigning the true.

I. Let us remove the false ideas, which, at first, present themselves to the imagination; as if, when we say that God is present in any place, we mean that he is actually contained therein; as if, when we say that God is in every place, we mean to assign to him a real and proper extension.

* The philosopher intended by Mr. S. I suppose, is his countryman Descartes, born in 1596. Vie de Desc. par Baillet.

sion. Neither of these is designed; and to remove these ideas, my brethren, two reflections are sufficient.

God is a spirit. A spirit cannot be in a place, at least in the manner in which we conceive of place.

1. God is a spirit. What relation can you find between wisdom, power, mercy, and all the other attributes, which enter into your notion of the divinity, and the nature of bodies? Pulverize matter, give it all the different forms of which it is susceptible, elevate it to its highest degree of attainment, make it vast and immense, moderate or small, luminous or obscure, opaque or transparent: there will never result any thing but figures, and never will you be able, by all these combinations or divisions, to produce one single sentiment, one single thought, like that of the meanest and most contracted of all mankind. If matter then cannot be the subject of one single operation of the soul of a mechanic, how shall it be the subject of those attributes which make the essence of God himself?

But perhaps God, who is spiritual in one part of his essence, may be corporeal in another part, like man, who, although he hath a spiritual soul, is yet united to a portion of matter. No: for, however admirable in man that union of spiritual and sensible may be, and those laws which unite his soul to his body, nothing more fully marks his weakness and dependence, and consequently nothing can less agree with the divine essence. Is it not a mark of the dependence of an immortal and intelligent soul, to be enveloped in a little flesh and blood, which, according to their different motions, determine his joy or sorrow, his happiness or misery? Is it not a mark of the weakness of our spirits, to have the power of acting only on that little matter to which we are united, and to have no power over more? Who

can imagine that God hath such limits? He hath no body: he is united to none; yet he is united to all. That celebrated philosopher, shall I call him? or atheist,* who said that the assemblage of all existence constituted the divine essence, who would have us consider all corporeal beings as the body of the divinity, published a great extravagance, if he meant that the divine essence consisted of this assemblage. But there is a very just sense, in which it may be said that the whole universe is the body of the Deity. In effect, as I call this portion of matter my body, which I move, act, and direct as I please, so God actuates by his will every part of the universe: he obscures the sun, he calms the winds, he commands the sea. But this very notion excludes all corporiety from God, and proves that God is a spirit. If God sometimes represents himself with feet, with hands, with eyes, he means in these portraits, rather to give us emblems of his attributes, than images (properly speaking) of any parts which he possesseth. Therefore, when he attributes these to himself, he gives them so vast an extent, that we easily perceive they are not to be grosly understood. Hath he hands? they are hands *which weigh the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance*, which *measure the waters in the hollow of his hand, and mete out the heavens with a span*, Isa. lx. 12. Hath he eyes? they are eyes that penetrate the most unmeasurable distances. Hath he feet? they are feet which reach from heaven to earth, for the *heaven is his throne, and the earth is his footstool*, ch. lxvi. 1. Hath he a voice? it is as *the sound of many waters, breaking the cedars of Lebanon, making mount Sirion skip*

* Mr. S. means, I should suppose, Spinoza; whose system of atheism, says a sensible writer, is more gross, and therefore less dangerous, than others; his poison carrying its antidote with it.

skip like an unicorn, and the hinds to calve, Pſal. xxix. 3, 5, 6, 9.

This reminds me of a beautiful paſſage in Plato. He ſays that the gods, particularly the chief god, the ineffable beauty, as he calls him, cannot be conceived of but by the underſtanding only, and by quitting ſenſible objects; that, in order to contemplate the divinity, terreſtrial ideas muſt be ſurmounted; that the eyes cannot ſee him; that the ears cannot hear him. A thought which Julian the apoſtate, a great admirer of that philoſopher, ſo nobly expreſſes in his ſatire on the Cæſars. Thus every thing ſerves to eſtabliſh our firſt principle, that God is a ſpirit.

2. But to prove that God is a ſpirit, and to prove that he occupies no place, at leaſt as our imagination conceives, is, in our opinion, to eſtabliſh the ſame theſis.

I know how difficult it is to make this conſequence intelligible and clear, not only to thoſe who have never been accuſtomed to meditation, and who are therefore more excuſable for having confuſed ideas; but even to ſuch as, having cultivated the ſciences, are moſt intent on refining their ideas. I freely acknowledge, that after we have uſed our utmoſt efforts to riſe above ſenſe and matter, it will be extremely difficult to conceive the exiſtence of a ſpirit, without conceiving it in a certain place. Yet, I think, whatever difficulty there may be in the ſyſtem of thoſe who maintain that an immaterial being cannot be in a place, properly ſo called, there are greater difficulties ſtill in the oppoſite opinion: for, what is immaterial hath no parts; what hath no parts hath no form; what hath no form hath no extenſion; what hath no extenſion can have no ſituation in place, properly ſo called. For what is it to be in place? is it not to fill ſpace? is it not to be adjuſted with ſurrounding bodies?

bodies? how adjust with surrounding bodies without parts? how consist of parts without being corporeal? But if you ascribe a real and proper extension to a spirit, every thought of that spirit would be a separate portion of that extension, as every part of the body is a separate portion of the whole body; every operation of spirit would be a modification of that extension, as every operation of body is a modification of body; and, were this the case, there would be no absurdity in saying that a thought is round, or square, or cubic, which is nothing less than the confounding of spirit with matter. Thus the idea, which our imagination forms of the omnipresence of God, when it represents the essence of the Supreme Being filling infinite spaces, as we are lodged in our houses, is a false idea that ought to be carefully avoided.

II. What notions then must we form of the immensity of God? In what sense do we conceive that the infinite Spirit is every where present? My brethren, the bounds of our knowledge are so strait, our sphere is so contracted, we have such imperfect ideas of spirits, even of our own spirits, and, for a much stronger reason, of the Father of spirits, that no genius in the world, however exalted you may suppose him, after his greatest efforts of meditation, can say to you, Thus far extend the attributes of God; behold a complete idea of his immensity and omnipresence. Yet, by the help of sound reason, above all by the aid of revelation, we may give you, if not complete, at least distinct ideas of the subject: it is possible, if not to indicate all the senses in which God is immense, at least to point out some: it is possible, if not to shew you all the truth, at least to discover it in part.

Let us not conceive the omnipresence of God as a particular attribute (if I may venture to say so) of the Deity, as goodness or wisdom, but as the

the extent or infinity of many others. The omnipresence of God is that universal property by which he communicates himself to all, diffuses himself through all, is the great director of all, or, to confine ourselves to more distinct ideas still, the infinite spirit is present in every place.

1. By a boundless knowledge.
2. By a general influence.
3. By an universal direction.

God is every where, because he *seeth* all, because he *influenceth* all, because he *directeth* all. This we must prove and establish. But if you would judge rightly of what you have heard, and of what you may still hear, you must remember that this subject hath no relation to your pleasures, nor to your policy, nor to any of those objects which occupy and fill your whole souls; and consequently, that if you would follow us, you must stretch your meditation, and go, as it were, out of yourselves.

1. The first idea of God's omnipresence is his *omniscience*. God is every where present, because he *seeth* all. This the prophet had principally in view. "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising, thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it," ver. 1, 2, 3, &c. Then follow the words of our text: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit," and so on.

Let us not then consider the Deity, after the example of the schoolmen, as a point fixed in the universality of beings. Let us consider the universality of beings as a point, and the Deity as an immense eye, which sees all that passes in

that point, all that can poſſibly paſs there; and which, by an all-animating intelligence, makes an exact combination of all the effects of matter, and of all the diſpoſitions of ſpirit.

1. God knows all the effects of matter. An expert workman takes a parcel of matter proportioned to a work which he meditates, he makes divers wheels, diſpoſes them properly, and ſees, by the rules of his art, what muſt reſult from their aſſemblage. Suppoſe a ſublime, exact genius, knowing how to go from principle to principle, and from conſequence to conſequence, after foreſeeing what muſt reſult from two wheels joined together, ſhould imagine a third, he will as certainly know what muſt reſult from a third, as from a firſt and ſecond; after imagining a third, he may imagine a fourth, and properly arrange it with the reſt in his imagination; after a fourth a fifth, and ſo on to an endleſs number. Such a man could mathematically demonſtrate, in an exact and infallible manner, what muſt reſult from a work compoſed of all theſe different wheels. Suppoſe further, that this workman, having accurately conſidered the effects which would be produced on theſe wheels, by that ſubtle matter which in their whirlings continually ſurrounds them, and which, by its perpetual action and motion, chafes, wears, and diſſolves all bodies; this workman would tell you, with the ſame exactneſs, how long each of theſe wheels would wear, and when the whole work would be conſumed. Give this workman life and induſtry proportional to his imagination, furniſh him with materials proportional to his ideas, and he will produce a vaſt, immenſe work, all the different motions of which he can exactly combine; all the different effects of which he can evidently foreſee. He will ſee, in what time motion will be communicated from the firſt of theſe wheels to the ſecond, at what time the ſecond will move

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the third, and so of the rest: he will foretel all their different motions, and all the effects which must result from their different combinations.

Hitherto this is only supposition, my brethren, but it is a supposition that conducts us to the most certain of all facts. This workman is God. God is this sublime, exact, infinite genius. He calls into being matter, without motion, and, in some sense, without form. He gives this matter form and motion. He makes a certain number of wheels, or rather he makes them without number. He disposes them as he thinks proper. He communicates a certain degree of motion, agreeable to the laws of his wisdom. Thence arises the world which strikes our eyes. By the forementioned example, I conceive, that God, by his own intelligence, saw what must result from the arrangement of all the wheels that compose this world, and knew, with the utmost exactness, all their combinations. He saw that a certain degree of motion, imparted to a certain portion of matter, would produce water; that another degree of motion, communicated to another portion of matter, would produce fire; that another would produce earth, and so of the rest. He foresaw, with the utmost precision, what would result from this water, from this fire, from this earth when joined together, and agitated by such a degree of motion as he should communicate. By the bare inspection of the laws of motion, he foresaw fires, he foresaw shipwrecks, he foresaw earthquakes, he foresaw all the vicissitudes of time, he foresaw those which must put a period to time, when *the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, when the elements shall melt with fervent heat, when the earth with all the works that are in it shall be burnt up*, 2 Pet. iii. 10.

2. But, if God could combine all that would result from the laws of motion communicated to matter, he could also combine all that would result

sult from intelligence, freedom of will, and all the faculties which make the essence of spirits; and, before he had formed those spiritual beings which compose the intelligent world, he knew what all their ideas, all their projects, all their deliberations, would for ever be.

I am aware, that a particular consequence, which follows this doctrine, hath made some divines exclaim against this thesis, and, under the specious pretence of exculpating the Deity from the entrance of sin into this world, they have affirmed that God could not foresee the determinations of a free agent; for, say they, had he foreseen the abuse which man would have made of his liberty, by resolving to sin, his love to holiness would have engaged him to prevent it. But to reason in this manner is, in attempting to solve a difficulty, to leave that difficulty in all its force.

All they say on this article, proceeds from this principle, that a God infinitely just, and infinitely powerful, ought to display (if it be allowable to say so) all the infinity of his attributes to prevent sin. But this principle is notoriously false. Witness that very permission of sin which is objected to us. You will not acknowledge that God foresaw man's fall into sin: acknowledge, at least, that he foresaw the possibility of man's falling, and that, in forming a creature free, he knew that such a creature might chuse virtue or vice; acknowledge, at least, that God could have created man with so much knowledge, and could have afforded him so many succours; he could have presented such powerful motives to holiness incessantly, and discovered to him the dreadful consequences of his rebellion so effectually; he could have united obedience to his commands with so many delights, and the most distant thought of disobedience with so many disgusts; he could have banished from man every temptation

tion to sin, so that he would never have been a sinner. Yet God created man in another manner; consequently it is not true, even in your system, that God hath exerted all the power he could to prevent sin's entrance into the world. Consequently it is false, that a Being, who perfectly loves holiness, ought to display the whole extent of his attributes to prevent sin, and to establish virtue. Consequently, the principle on which you ground your denial of God's comprehension of all the dispositions of spirits, is an unwarrantable principle, and to attempt to solve the difficulty in this manner, is to leave it in all its force.

But if you consult revelation, you will find that God claims an universal knowledge of spirits. He says, he *searcheth and knoweth them*, Jer. xvii. 10. Rev. ii. 23. He foresaw, he foretold, the afflictions which Abraham's posterity would endure in Canaan, Gen. xv. 13. the hardening of Pharaoh, the infidelity of the Jews, the faith of the Gentiles, the crucifixion of the Messiah, Exod. iii. 19, the coming of the *prince* or leader, that is of Vespasian, or Titus, who would *destroy the city and the sanctuary*, Dan. ix. 25, 26. And consequently, we have a right to affirm, that God knows all the thoughts of the mind, and all the sentiments of the heart, as well as that he knows all the motions of matter.

Perhaps you wish, my brethren, that our speculations were carried further; perhaps you would have us disentangle the subject from all its difficulties; perhaps you wish we could make you comprehend, in a clear and distinct manner, how it is possible that such immense objects can be always present to the Supreme Intelligence; but what mortal tongue can express such sublime truths, or what capacity is able to conceive them! On this article, we are obliged with our prophet to exclaim, *such knowledge is too wonderful*

derful for me; it is high; I cannot attain unto it! ver. 6. In general, we conceive that the sphere of divine knowledge is not contracted by any of the limits that confine the spirits of mankind.

The human spirit is united to a portion of matter. Man can perform no operation without the agitation of his brain, without the motion of his animal spirits, without the help of his senses. But the brain wearies, the spirits evaporate, the senses are blunted, and the minutest alteration of body clogs the most penetrating and active genius. But God, as we have represented him, thinks, understands, meditates, without brain, without spirits, without any need of senses; not participating their nature, he never participates their alteration, and thus hath intelligence immediately from the treasure of intelligence itself.

The spirit of man owes its existence to a superior spirit, to a foreign cause, to a Being who gives him only such ideas as he thinks proper, and who hath been pleased to conceal numberless mysteries from him. But God, God not only does not owe his existence to a foreign cause, but all that exist derive their existence from him. His ideas were the models of all beings, and he hath only to contemplate himself perfectly to know them.

The spirit of man is naturally a finite spirit; he can consider only one circle of objects at once, many ideas confound him; if he would see too much, he sees nothing; he must successively contemplate what he cannot contemplate in one moment. But God is an infinite spirit; with one single look he beholdeth the whole universe. This is the first idea of the omnipresence of God. As I am accounted present in this auditory, because I see the objects that are here, because I am witness of all that passes here; so God is every where, because he sees all, because veils the

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most impenetrable, darkness the most thick, distances the most immense, can conceal nothing from his knowledge. Soar to the utmost heights, fly into the remotest climates, wrap thyself in the blackest darkness, every where, every where, thou wilt be under his eye. "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?"

But, 2. The knowledge of God is not a bare knowledge, his presence is not an idle presence; it is an active knowledge, it is a presence accompanied with action and motion. We said just now, that God was every where, because he *influenced* all, as far as influence could agree with his perfections. Remark this restriction, for as we are discussing a subject the most fertile in controversy, and as, in a discourse of an hour, it is impossible to answer all objections, which may be all answered elsewhere, we would give a general preservative against every mistake. We mean an influence which agrees with the divine perfections; and if from any of our general propositions, you infer any consequences injurious to those perfections, you may conclude, from that very reason, that you have stretched them beyond their due bounds. We repeat it then, God influenceth all things, as far as such influence agrees with his perfections.

When new beings appear, he is there. He influences their production. He gives to all *life, motion, and being*, Acts xvii. 28. "Thou, even thou art Lord alone, thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth and all things that are therein, the seas and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all, and the host of heaven worshippeth thee," Neh. ix. 6. "O Lord, I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made

made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance yet being unperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them," Psal. cxxxix. 14, 15, 16. "Thine hands have made me, and fashioned me together round about. Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews."

When beings are preserved, he is there. He influences their preservation. "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens, and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. Thou preservest man and beast," Psal. xxxvi. 5, 6. "When thou openest thy hand they are filled with good: thou hidest thy face they are troubled, thou takest away their breath they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy spirit they are created, and thou renewest the face of the earth," Psal. civ. 28, 29, 30.

When the world is disordered, he is there. He influenceth wars, pestilences, famines, and all the vicissitudes which disorder the world. If nature refuse her productions, it is because he hath *made the heaven as iron, and the earth as brass*, Lev. xxvi. 19. If peace succeed war, he makes both. If *lions slay the inhabitants of Samaria*, it is *the Lord who sends them*, 2 Kings xvii. 25. When tempestuous winds break down those immense banks which your industry has opposed to them, when a devouring fire reduceth your houses to ashes, it is he who *makes the winds his messengers, and his ministers flames of fire*, Psal. civ. 4.

When every thing succeeds according to our wishes, he is there. He influenceth prosperity. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it. Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is

vain

vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows. It is God who giveth his beloved sleep," Psal. cxxvii. 1, 2.

When our understanding is informed, he is there. He influenceth our knowledge. For *in his light we see light*, Psal. xxxvi. 9. "He lighteth every man that cometh into the world," John i. 9.

When our heart disposeth us to our duties, he is there. He influenceth our virtues. It is he who *worketh in us, both to will and to do of his own good pleasure*, Phil. ii. 13. It is he who *giveth us not only to believe but to suffer for his sake*, chap. i. 29. It is he who *giveth to all that ask him liberally and upbraideth not*, James i. 5.

When the grossest errors cover us, he is there. He influenceth errors. It is God who *sends strong delusions that men should believe a lie*, 2 Thess. ii. 11. "Go make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears," Isa. vi. 10.

When we violate the laws of righteousness, he is there. He influenceth sins, even the greatest sins. Witness Pharaoh, whose *heart he hardened*, Exod. iv. 21. Witness Shimei, whom *the Lord bade to curse David*, 2 Sam. xvi. 11. Witness what Isaiah said, *the Lord hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst of Egypt*, chap. xix. 14.

When magistrates, our earthly gods, consult and deliberate, he is there. He influenceth policy. It is he who *hath the hearts of kings in his hand, and turneth them as the rivers of water*, Prov. xxi. 1. It is he who *giveth kings in his anger, and taketh them away in his wrath*, Hosea xiii. 11. It is he who maketh *the Assyrian the rod of his anger*, Isa. x. 5. "Herod and Pilate, the Gentiles and the people of Israel,

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did what his hand and his counsel determined before to be done," Acts iv. 27, 28.

When we live, when we die, he is there. He influenceth life and death. "Man's days are determined, the number of his months are with him, he has appointed his bounds that he cannot pass," Job xiv. 5. "To God the Lord belongs the issues from death," Psal. lxviii. 20. "He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up," 1 Sam. ii. 6.

He influences the least events, as well as the most considerable. Not being fatigued with the care of great things, he can occupy himself about the smallest without prejudice to the rest; *number the hairs of our heads*, and not let even *a sparrow fall without his will*, Matt. x. 29, 30.

But, 3. When God communicates himself to all, when he thus acts on all, when he diffuseth himself thus through the whole, he connects all with his own designs, and makes all serve his own counsels: and this is our third idea of his immensity and omnipresence. God is present with all, because he *directs* all.

Doth he call the creatures into existence? it is to manifest his perfections. It is to have subjects on whom he may shower his favours; it is, as it were, to go out of himself, and to form through the whole universe a concert resounding the Creator's existence and glory. "For the invisible things of God, even his eternal power and godhead, are understood by the things that are made," Rom. i. 20. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work. Day unto day uttereth speech, night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard," Psal. xix. 1, 2, 3.

Doth he preserve his creatures? it is to answer his own designs, the depth of which no finite mind can fathom; but designs which we shall

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one day know, and admire his wisdom when we know them, as we adore it now, though we know them not.

Doth he send plagues, wars, famines? it is to make those feel his justice who have abused his goodness; it is to avenge the violation of his law, the contempt of his gospel, the forgetting and forsaking of the interest of his church.

Doth he afford us prosperity? it is to *draw us with the bands of love*, Hosea xi. 4. it is to reveal himself to us by that love which is his essence; it is to engage us to imitate him, who *never leaves himself without witness in doing good*, Acts xiv. 17.

Doth he impart knowledge to us? it is to discover the snares that surround us, the miseries that threaten us, the origin from which we sprang, the course of life we should follow, and the end at which we should aim.

Doth he communicate virtues? it is to animate us in our race; it is to convince us that there is a mighty arm to raise us from the abyss into which our natural corruption hath plunged us; it is that we may *work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, knowing that God worketh in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure*, Phil. ii. 12, 13.

Doth he send us error? it is to make us respect that truth which we have resisted.

Doth he abandon us to our vices? it is to punish us for some other vices which we have committed voluntarily and freely; so that, if we could comprehend it, his love for holiness never appears more clearly, than when he abandons men to vice in this manner.

Doth he raise up kings? it is always to oblige them to administer justice, to protect the widow and the orphan, to maintain order and religion. Yet he often permits them to violate equity, to oppress their people, and to become the scourges

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of his anger. By them he frequently teacheth us how little account he makes of human grandeurs, seeing he bestows them sometimes upon unworthy men, upon men allured by voluptuousness, governed by ambition, and dazzled with their own glory, upon men who ridicule piety, sell their consciences, negociate faith and religion, sacrificing the souls of their children to the infamous passions that govern themselves.

Doth he prolong our life? it is because he *is long suffering to us*, 2 Pet. iii. 9. it is because he opens in our favour *the riches of his goodness and forbearance, to lead us to repentance*, Rom. ii. 4.

Doth he call us to die? it is to open those eternal books in which our actions are registered; it is to gather our souls into his bosom, *to bind them up in the bundle of life*, 1 Sam. xxv. 29. to mix them with the ransomed armies of all *nations, tongues, and people*, Rev. vii. 9.

Such are our ideas of the omnipresence of God. Thus God seeth all, influenceth all, directeth all. In this sense we are to understand this magnificent language of scripture, "Will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee," 1 Kings viii. 27. "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool," Isa. lxvi. 1. "Where is the house that ye build unto me? do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord. Am I God at hand, and not afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him?" Jer. xxiii. 23, 24. This is what the heathens had a glimpse of, when they said, that God was a circle, the centre of which was every where, and its circumference no where. That all things were full of Jupiter. That he filled all his works. That, fly whither we would, we were always before his eyes. This is what the followers of Mahomet meant, when they said, that

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where there were two persons, God made the third; where there were three, God made the fourth. Above all, this was our prophet's meaning throughout the Psalm, a part of which we have explained. "O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising, thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee," ver. 1, &c.

But perhaps, during the course of this meditation, you may have murmured at our presenting an object, of which all the preaching in the world can give you only imperfect ideas. Suspend your judgments; we are going to shew you whither this discourse, all glimmering as it is, ought to conduct you. We are going to see what salutary consequences follow our efforts, even the weak efforts that we have been making, to explain the grandeur and omnipresence of God. Let us pass to the conclusion, the chief design of this discourse.

1. Our first reflection is on *the difficulties we meet with in fixing our minds on such subjects*

as we have been hearing. You have doubtleſs experienced, if you have endeavoured to follow us, that you are weary, and wander when you would go beyond matter. Our minds find almoſt nothing real, where they meet with nothing ſenſible. As if the whole eſſence of beings were corporeal, the mind loſeth its way when it ceaſeth to be directed by bodies, and it needs the help of imagination to repreſent even thoſe things which are not ſuſceptible of images; and yet whatever is moſt grand and noble in the nature of beings, is ſpirit. The ſublimeſt objects, angels who are continually before God, *seraphims* who *cover their faces* in his preſence, Iſa. vi. 2. cherubims who are the miniſters of his will, *thousand thousands which minister unto him, ten thousand times ten thousand which stand before him*, Dan. vii. 10. what is moſt glorious in man, what elevates him above other animals, a ſoul made in the image of God himſelf, the Being of beings, the Sovereign Beauty; all theſe beings are ſpiritual, abſtract, free from ſenſe and matter. Moreover, what pleaſes and enchants us in bodies, even that comes from a ſubject abſtract, ſpiritual and corporeal. Without your ſoul, aliments have no taſte, flowers no ſmell, the earth no enamel, fire no heat, the ſtars no brilliancy, the ſun no light. Matter of itſelf is void, and groſs, deſtitute of all the qualities with which our imagination clothes it, and which are proper to our ſouls. What ought we to conclude from this reflection? My brethren, have you no idea of your dignity, and primitive grandeur? Have you not even yet ſome faint reſemblances of beings formed in the Creator's image? You ought, feeble as you are, confined as you are in a manner to matter, you ſhould deplore your miſery; you ſhould groan under that neceſſity, which, in ſome ſort, confounds your ſouls with a little duſt; you ſhould ſigh after that happy ſtate in

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which your rapid, free, and unclogged spirits, shall meditate like themselves. This is the first duty we should prescribe to you.

2. Our next reflection is on *the majesty of our religion.* That must certainly be thought the true religion which gives us the noblest ideas of God. Let our religion be judged by this rule. Where do we see the attributes of the Supreme Being placed in so clear a light? what can be more noble than this idea of God? what can be conceived more sublime than a Being whom nothing escapes, before whom *all things are naked and open*, Heb. iv. 13. who, by one single look, fully comprehends all beings, past, present, and to come, all that do exist, all that possibly can exist; who thinks, in the same instant, with equal facility on bodies and spirits, on all the dimensions of time and of matter? What more noble can be conceived than a Being who imparteth himself to all, diffuseth himself through all, influenceth all, giveth life and motion to all? What can be conceived more noble than a Being who directeth the conduct of the whole universe, who knoweth how to make all concur to his designs, who knoweth how to connect alike with the laws of order and equity, the virtues of the righteous, the vices of the wicked, the praises of the happy, the blasphemies of the victims sacrificed to his vengeance in hell? When we find in any heathen philosopher, amidst a thousand false notions, amidst a thousand wild imaginations, some few leaves of the flowers with which our bibles are strewed, we are ready to cry a miracle, a miracle, we transmit these shreds of the Deity (if I may be allowed to speak so) to the most distant posterity, and these ideas, all defective, and all defiled as they are, procure their authors immortal reputation. On this principle, what respect, what veneration, what deference ought we to have for the patriarchs and the prophets, for the evangelists

ists and the apostles, who spoke of God in so sublime a manner! However, be not surprised at their superiority over the great pagan geniuses; had the biblical writers, like them, been guided only by human reason, like them they would have wandered too. If they spoke so nobly of God, it was because they had received that *spirit who searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God*, 1 Cor. ii. 10. It was because *all scripture was given by inspiration*, 2 Tim. iii. 16. It was because *the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*, 2 Pet. i. 21.

3. Make a third reflection. *This attribute of God removes the greatest stumbling-blocks that sceptics and infidels pretend to meet with in religion.* It justifies all those dark mysteries which are above the comprehension of our feeble reason. We would not make use of this reflection to open a way for human fancies, and to authorize every thing that is presented to us under the idea of the marvellous. All doctrines that are incomprehensible are not divine, nor ought we to embrace any opinion merely because it is beyond our knowledge. But when a religion, in other respects, hath good guarantees, when we have good arguments to prove that such a revelation comes from heaven, when we certainly know that it is God who speaks, ought we to be surprised, if ideas of God, which come so fully authenticated, absorb and confound us? I freely grant, that, had I consulted my own reason only, I could not have discovered some mysteries of the gospel. Nevertheless, when I think on the immensity of God, when I cast my eyes on that vast ocean, when I consider that immense all, nothing astonishes me, nothing stumbles me, nothing seems to me inadmissible, how incomprehensible soever it may be. When the subject is divine, I am ready to believe all, to admit all, to receive all; provided

vided I be convinced that it is God himself who speaks to me, or any one on his part. After this, I am no more astonished that there are three distinct persons in one divine essence; one God, and yet a Father, a Son, and a Holy Ghost. After this, I am no more astonished that God foresees all without forcing any; permits sin without forcing the sinner; ordains free and intelligent creatures to such and such ends, yet without destroying their intelligence or their liberty. After this, I am no more astonished that the justice of God required a satisfaction proportional to his greatness, that his own love hath provided that satisfaction, and that God, from the abundance of his compassion, designed the mystery of an incarnate God; a mystery which angels admire while sceptics oppose; a mystery which absorbs human reason, but which fills all heaven with songs of praise; a mystery which is the *great mystery*, by excellence, 1 Tim. iii. 16. but the greatness of which nothing should make us reject, since religion proposeth it as the grand effort of the wisdom of the incomprehensible God, and commandeth us to receive it on the testimony of the incomprehensible God himself. Either religion must tell us nothing about God, or what it tells us must be beyond our capacities, and, in discovering even the borders of this immense ocean, it must needs exhibit a vast extent in which our feeble eyes are lost. But what surprises me, what stumbles me, what frightens me, is to see a diminutive creature, a contemptible man, a little ray of light glimmering through a few feeble organs, controvert a point with the Supreme Being, oppose that Intelligence who sitteth at the helm of the world; question what he affirms, dispute what he determines, appeal from his decisions, and, even after God hath given evidence, reject all doctrines that are beyond his capacity. Enter into thy nothingness, mortal creature,

creature. What madness animates thee? How dareſt thou pretend, thou who art but a point, thou whoſe eſſence is but an atom, to meaſure thyſelf with the Supreme Being, with him who fills heaven and earth, with him whom *heaven, the heaven of heavens cannot contain?* 1 Kings viii. 27. "Canſt thou by ſearching find out God? Canſt thou find out the Almighty to perfection? High as heaven, what canſt thou do? deeper than hell, what canſt thou know?" Job xi. 7. "He ſtretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing. He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds, the pillars of heaven tremble, and are aſtoniſhed at his reproof: Lo theſe are parts of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can underſtand? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and anſwer thou me. Where waſt thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou haſt underſtanding," ch. xxvi. 7, 11, 14. "Who hath laid the meaſures thereof? who hath ſtretched the line upon it? whereupon are the foundations thereof faſtened? who laid the corner-ſtone thereof, when the morning ſtars ſang together, and all the ſons of God ſhouted for joy? Who ſhut up the ſea with doors, when I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkneſs a ſwaddling band for it? when I brake up for it my decreed place, and ſet bars and doors, and ſaid, Hitherto ſhalt thou come and no further: and here ſhall thy proud waves be ſtayed?" ch. xxxviii. 1, 2, 3, &c. "He that reproveth God, let him anſwer this," ch. xl. 2. "O Lord, ſuch knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is too high, I cannot attain unto it!"

4. But, my brethren, ſhall theſe be the only inferences from our text? ſhall we reap only ſpeculations from this diſcourſe? ſhall we only believe, admire, and exclaim? Ah! from this

idea

idea of God, I see *all the virtues issue which religion prescribes!*

If such be the grandeur of the God I adore, miserable wretch! what ought my *repentance* to be! I, a contemptible worm, I, a creature whom God could tread beneath his feet, and crush into dust by a single act of his will, I have rebelled against the great God, I have endeavoured to *provoke him to jealousy*, as if I had been *stronger than he*, 1 Cor. x. 22. I have insulted that Majesty which the angels of heaven adore; I have attacked God, with madness and boldness, on his throne, and in his empire. Is it possible to feel remorses too cutting for sins which the majesty of the offended, and the littleness of the offender, make so very atrocious?

If such be the grandeur of God, what should our *humility* be! Grandees of the world, mortal divinities, who swell with vanity in the presence of God, oppose yourselves to the immense God. Behold his eternal ideas, his infinite knowledge, his general influence, his universal direction; enter his immense ocean of perfections and virtues, what are ye? a grain of dust, a point, an atom, a nothing.

If such be the grandeur of God, what ought our *confidence* to be! "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Rom. viii. 31. Poor creature, tossed about the world, as by so many winds, by hunger, by sickness, by persecution, by misery, by nakedness, by exile; fear not in a vessel of which God himself is the pilot.

But above all, if such be the grandeur of God, if God be every where present, what should our *vigilance* be! and, to return to the idea with which we began, what impression should this thought make on reasonable souls! *God seeth me. When thou wast under the fig-tree*, said Jesus Christ to Nathaniel, *I saw thee*, John i. 48. See Eccles. iii. 23, 24, 25. We do not know

what

what Jesus Christ saw under the fig-tree, nor is it necessary now to inquire; but it was certainly something which, Nathaniel was fully persuaded, no mortal eye had seen. As soon, therefore, as Jesus Christ had uttered these words, he believed, and said, *Rabbi, thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.* My brethren, God useth the same language to each of you to-day: *when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.*

Thou hypocrite, when wrapped in a veil of religion, embellished with exterior piety, thou concealedst an impious heart, and didst endeavour to impose on God and man, *I saw thee.* I penetrated all those labyrinths, I dissipated all those darknesses, I dived into all thy deep designs.

Thou worldling, who, with a prudence truly infernal, hast the art of giving a beautiful tint to the most odious objects; who appearest not to hate thy neighbour, because thou dost not openly attack him; not to falsify thy promise, because thou hast the art of eluding it; not to oppress thy dependents, because thou knowest how to impose silence on them: *I saw thee*, when thou gavest those secret stabs, when thou didst receive those bribes, and didst accumulate those wages of unrighteousness, which cry for vengeance against thee.

Thou slave to sensuality, ashamed of thine excesses before the face of the sun, *I saw thee*, when, with bars and bolts, with obscurity and darkness, and complicated precautions, thou didst hide thyself from the eyes of men, *defile the temple of God, and make the members of Christ the members of a harlot*, 1 Cor. vi. 15.

My brethren, the discourses, which we usually preach to you, absorb your minds in a multitude of ideas. A collection of moral ideas perhaps confound instead of instructing you, and when we attempt to engage you in too many reflections, you enter really into none. Behold an epitome

of

of religion. Behold a morality in three words. Return to your houſes, and every where carry this reflection with you, *God seeth me*, *God seeth me*. To all the wiles of the devil, to all the ſnares of the world, to all the baits of ſin, oppoſe this reflection, *God seeth me*. If, clothed with a human form, he were always in your path, were he to follow you to every place, were he always before you with his majeſtic face, with eyes flaſhing with lightning, with looks inſpiring terror, dare ye before his auguſt preſence give a looſe to your paſſions? But you have been hearing that his majeſtic face is every where, thoſe ſparkling eyes do inſpect you in every place, thoſe terrible looks do conſider you every where. Particularly, in the enſuing week, while you are preparing for the Lord's ſupper, recollect this. Let each examine his own heart, and endeavour to ſearch into his conſcience, where he may diſcover ſo much weakneſs, ſo much corruption, ſo much hardneſs, ſo many unclean ſources overflowing with ſo many exceſſes, and let this idea ſtrike each of you, *God seeth me*. God ſeeth me, as I ſee myſelf, unclean, ungrateful, and rebellious. O may this idea produce contrition and ſorrow, a juſt remorſe and a ſound converſion, a holy and a fervent communion, crowned with graces and virtues. Happy, if, after our examination, we have a new heart! a heart agreeable to thoſe eyes that ſearch and try it! Happy, if, after our communion, after a new examination, we can ſay with the prophet, *O Lord, thou haſt proved mine heart, thou haſt tried me, and haſt found nothing*, Pſal. xvii. 3. So be it. To God be honour and glory for ever. Amen.

SERMON II.

THE MANNER OF PRAISING GOD.

Preached after the adminiſtration of the Lord's Supper.

PSALM xxxiii. 1.

Praiſe is comely for the upright.

THERE is ſomething very noble, my brethren, in the end for which we are now aſſembled in the preſence of God. His providence hath infinitely diverſified the conditions of thoſe who compoſe this aſſembly. Some are placed in the moſt eminent, others in the moſt obſcure poſts of ſociety. Some live in ſplendor and opulence, others in meanneſs and indigence. One is employed in the turbulence of the army, another in the ſilence of the ſtudy. Notwithſtanding this infinite variety of employments, ranks, and ages, we all aſſemble to-day in one place; one object occupies us; one ſentiment animates us; one voice makes the church reſound, *Praiſe ye the Lord, for his mercy endureth for ever*, Pſal. cxxxvi. 1. If there be an object, that can give a mortal any ideas of the firſt impreſſions, which are made on a ſoul, at its firſt entering the glorious palace of the bleſſed God in heaven, it is this. The firſt objects, that ſtrike ſuch a ſoul, are multitudes of all nations, tongues, and people, concentered in a meditation on the beneficence of God, proſtrating themſelves before his throne, caſting their crowns at his feet, and crying out of the abundance of their hearts, which contemplate the perfections of a Being worthy of their profoundeſt praiſe, *Amen, Bleſſing, and glory, and wiſdom, and thankſgiving, and honour, and power,*

power, and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever, Amen, Rev. vii. 12. "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and waſt, and art to come; becauſe thou haſt taken to thee thy great power, and haſt reigned," chap. xi. 17. "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; juſt and true are thy ways, thou King of ſaints!" chap. xv. 3. "Unto him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and prieſts unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen," chap. i. 5. 6. This is the employment of the bleſſed in heaven: this is what we are doing to-day on earth.

But what a contradiction, what a contraſt appears, when, lifting up the exterior habit of piety, that covers ſome of us, we examine the inward diſpoſitions of the heart. The pſalms, which are uttered with the voice, are contradicted by the tempers of the heart. The mouths, that were juſt now opened to bleſs the Creator, will preſently be opened again to blaſpheme and to curſe him. The praiſes, which ſeemed ſo proper to pleaſe him in whoſe honour they were offered, will incur this reproof, Thou *wicked* man! *What haſt thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth?* Pſal. l. 16.

My brethren, if we would join our voices with thoſe of angels, we muſt have the ſentiments of angels. We muſt, (at leaſt as far as the duty is imitable by ſuch frail creatures) we muſt, in order to worſhip God, as thoſe happy ſpirits praiſe him, love him as they do, ſerve him as they do, devote ourſelves to him as they devote themſelves to him; and this is the manner of praiſing God, to which I exhort, and in which I would endeavour to inſtruct you to-day, agreeably to the prophet's exalted notion of it in the words of the text. What day can be more proper to inſpire ſuch a noble deſign? What day can be more proper to

engage

engage you to mix your worſhip with that of glorified intelligences, than this, on which we are come *unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, and to the first-born which are written in heaven?* Heb. xii. 22, 23.

But, who are we, to be admitted into a ſociety ſo holy? Great God! Thou doſt appear to us to-day, as thou didſt formerly to thy prophet, *ſitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and thy train filling the temple*, Iſa. vi. 1. Around thee ſtand the ſeraphims, covering themſelves with their wings in thy majeſtic preſence, and crying one to another, *Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hoſts, the whole earth is full of his glory*, ver. 3. We are ſtricken, as thy prophet was, with ſuch a tremendous viſion, and each of us cries with him, *Woe is me! I am undone! I am a man of unclean lips!* and yet, *mine eyes have ſeen the King, the Lord of hoſts*, ver. 5. O great God! command one of thy ſeraphims to fly to us, as he flew to him; bid him touch our mouths, as he touched his, with *a live coal taken from off the altar*, ver. 6. and, in this day of grace and mercy, let him ſay to each of us, *Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy ſin purged! Amen*, ver. 7.

"Praiſe is comely for the upright." The praiſing of God is a duty, of which we may form two different notions, a *general* and a *particular* notion. By a *general* notion of praiſe, I mean, the exerciſe of a man, who, being capable of examining ſublime objects, and of comprehending grand ſubjects, fixeth his attention on the attributes of God, feels the force of thoſe proofs which eſtabliſh the truth of them, is delighted with them to a certain degree, and is happy in publiſhing their praiſe. I mean, by a *particular* notion of praiſing God, the exerciſe of a man,

who, having received some signal favour of God, loves to express his gratitude for it.

Each of these exercises of praise supposeth *reflections* and *sentiments*. To praise God in the first sense, to reflect on his attributes, to converse, and to write about them, without having the heart affected, and without loving a Being, who is described as supremely amiable, is a lifeless praise, more fit for a worldly philosopher than for a rational christian. To praise God in the second sense, to be affected with the favours of God, without having any distinct notions of God, without knowing whether the descriptions of the perfections, that are attributed to him, be flights of fancy or real truths, is an exercise more fit for a bigot, who believes without knowing why, than for a *spiritual man, who judgeth all things*, 1 Cor. ii. 15. If we distinguish the part, which these two faculties, reflection and sentiment, take in these two exercises of praise, we may observe that the first, I mean the praise of God taken in a general sense, is the fruit of *reflection*, and the second of *sentiment*. The first is, if I may be allowed to speak so, the praise of the mind; the second is the praise of the heart.

It is difficult to determine which of these two notions prevails in the text, whether the psalmist use the word *praise* in the first or in the second sense. If we judge by the whole subject of the psalm, both are included. The praise of the heart is easily discovered. Whether the author of the psalm were Hezekiah, as many of the fathers thought, who say, this prince composed it after the miraculous defeat of Senacherib; or whether, which is most likely, David were the composer of it, after one of those preternatural deliverances, with which his life was so often signalized; what I call the praise of the heart, that is, a lively sense of some inestimable blessing, is clearly to be seen. On the other hand, it is still

clearer,

clearer, that the sacred author doth not celebrate only one particular object in the psalm. He gives a greater scope to his meditation, and comprifeth in it all the works, and all the perfections of God.

Although the solemnity of this day calls us less to the praise of the mind, than to that of the heart; although we intend to make the latter the principal subject of this discourse; yet it is necessary to attend a little to the former.

I. *The praise of the Lord*, taking the word praise in the vague sense, that we have affixed to the term, *is comely for the upright:* and it is comely for none but for them.

"Praise is comely for the upright." Nothing is more worthy of the attention of an intelligent being, particularly, nothing is more worthy of the imitation of a superior genius, than the wonderful perfections of the Creator. A man of superior genius is required, indeed, to use his talents to cultivate the sciences and the liberal arts; but after all, the mind of man, especially of that man to whom God hath given superior talents, which assimilate him to celestial intelligences, was not created to unravel a point in chronology, to learn the various sounds by which different nations signify their ideas, to measure a line, or to lose itself in an algebraic calculation; the mind of such a man was not created to study the stars, to count their number, to measure their magnitude, to discover more than have yet been observed. Nobler objects ought to occupy him. It becomes such a man to contemplate God, to guide the rest of mankind, to lead them to God, who *dwelleth in the light, which no man can approach unto*, 1 Tim. vi. 16. and to teach us to attenuate the clouds, that hide him from our feeble eyes. It becomes such a man to use that superiority, which his knowledge gives him over us, to elevate our hearts above the low region of terrestrial

things,

things, where they grovel with the brute beasts, and to help us to place them on the bright abode of the immortal God. The *praise* of the Lord *is comely for upright men.*

But praise is comely *only for upright men.* I believe it is needless now to explain the word *uprightness.* The term is taken in the text in the noblest sense: this is a sufficient explication, and this is sufficient also to convince us that the praising of God is comely for none but upright men. I cannot see, without indignation, a philosopher trifle with the important questions that relate to the attributes of God, and make them simple exercises of genius, in which the heart hath no concern, examining whether there be a God, with the same indifference with which he inquires whether there be a vacuum in nature, or whether matter be infinitely divisible. On determining the questions which relate to the divine attributes, depend our hopes and fears, the plans we must form, and the course of life we ought to pursue; and with these views we should examine the perfections of God; these are consequences that should follow our inquiries. With such dispositions the psalmist celebrated the praises of God, in the psalm out of which we have taken the text. How comely are the praises of God in the mouth of such a man!

Let us follow the holy man a moment in his meditation. His psalm is not composed in scholastic form, in which the author confines himself to fixed rules, and scrupulously following a philosophical method, lays down principles, and infers consequences. However, he establisheth principles the most proper to give us sublime ideas of the Creator; and he speaks with more precision of the works and attributes of God, than the greatest philosophers have spoken them.

How absurdly have philosophers treated of the origin of the world? How few of them have reasoned

reaſoned concluſively on this important ſubject? Our prophet ſolves the important queſtion by one ſingle principle, and what is more remarkable, this principle, which is nobly expreſſed, carries the cleareſt evidence with it. The principle is this: *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.* This is the moſt rational account that was ever given of the creation of the world. The world is the work of a ſelf-efficient will, and it is this principle alone that can account for its creation. The moſt ſimple appearances in nature are ſufficient to lead us to this principle. Either my will is ſelf-efficient, or there is ſome other being whoſe will is ſelf-efficient.

What I ſay of myſelf I ſay of my parents, and what I affirm of my parents I affirm of my more remote anceſtors, and of all the finite creatures from whom they derived their exiſtence. Moſt certainly, either finite beings have ſelf-efficient wills, which it is impoſſible to ſuppoſe, for a finite creature with a ſelf-efficient will is a contradiction; either, I ſay, a finite creature hath a ſelf-efficient will, or there is a firſt cauſe who hath a ſelf-efficient will; and that there is ſuch a being, is the principle of the pſalmiſt: *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.*

If philoſophers have reaſoned inconcluſively on the origin of the world, they have ſpoken of its government with equal uncertainty. The pſalmiſt determines this queſtion with great facility, by a ſingle principle, which reſults from the former, and which, like the former, carries its evidence with it. "The Lord looketh from heaven: he conſidereth all the works of all the inhabitants of the earth," ver. 13, 14. This is the doctrine of Providence. And on what is the doctrine of Providence founded? On this principle: God *faſhioneth their hearts alike*, ver. 15.

Attend

Attend a moment to the evidence of this reasoning, my brethren. The doctrine of Providence, expreſſed in theſe words, *God considereth the works of the inhabitants of the earth*, is a neceſſary conſequence of this principle, *God faſhioneth their hearts alike;* and this principle is a neceſſary conſequence of that which the pſalmiſt had before laid down to account for the origin of the world. Yes! from the doctrine of God the Creator of men, follows that of God the inſpector, the director, the rewarder, and the puniſher of their actions. One of the moſt ſpecious objections, that hath ever been oppoſed to the doctrine of Providence, is a contraſt between the grandeur of God and the meanneſs of men. How can ſuch an inſignificant creature as man, be an object of the care and attention of ſuch a magnificent Being as God? No objection can be more ſpecious, or, in appearance, more invincible. The diſtance between the meaneſt inſect and the mightieſt monarch, who treads and cruſhes reptiles to death without the leaſt regard to them, is a very imperfect image of the diſtance between God and man. That which proves that it would be beneath the dignity of a monarch to obſerve the motions of ants, or worms, to intereſt himſelf in their actions, to puniſh, or to reward them, ſeems to demonſtrate, that God would degrade himſelf were he to obſerve, to direct, to puniſh, to reward mankind, who are infinitely inferior to him. But, one fact is ſufficient to anſwer this ſpecious objection: That is, that God hath created mankind. Doth God degrade himſelf more by governing than by creating mankind? Who can perſuade himſelf, that a wiſe Being hath given to intelligent creatures faculties capable of obtaining knowledge and virtue, without willing that they ſhould endeavour to acquire knowledge and virtue? Or who can imagine, that a wiſe Being, who willeth that his intelligent creatures

ſhould

should acquire knowledge and virtue, will not punish them, if they neglect those acquisitions; and will not shew, by the distribution of his benefits, that he approves their endeavours to obtain them?

Unenlightened philosophers have treated of the attributes of God with as much abstruseness as they have written of his works. The *moral attributes* of God, as they are called in the schools, were mysteries which they could not unfold. These may be reduced to two classes, attributes of *goodness* and attributes of *justice*. Philosophers, who have admitted these, have usually taken that for granted which they ought to have proved. They collected together in their minds all perfections, they reduced them all to one object, which they denominated *a perfect Being*: and supposing, without proving, that a perfect Being existed, they attributed to him, without proof, every thing that they considered as a perfection. The psalmist shews, by a surer way, that there is a God supremely just, and supremely good. It is necessary, in order to convince a rational being of the justice and goodness of God, to follow such a method as that which we follow to prove his existence. When we would prove the existence of God, we say, there are creatures; therefore, there is a Creator. In like manner, when we would prove, that the Creator is a just and a good Being, we say, there are qualities of goodness and justice in creatures; therefore, he, from whom these creatures derive their existence, is a Being just and good. Now this is the reasoning of the psalmist, in this psalm: *The Lord loveth righteousness and judgment, the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord*, ver. 5. that is to say, it is impossible to consider the works of the Creator, without receiving evidence of his goodness. All the works of nature, which demonstrate the goodness of God, prove his justice

also;

alſo; for God hath created us with ſuch diſpoſitions, that we cannot enjoy the gifts of his goodneſs without obeying the laws of his righteouſneſs. The happineſs of an individual, who procures a pleaſure by diſobeying the laws of equity, is a violent happineſs, which cannot be of long duration; and the proſperity of public bodies, when it is founded in iniquity, is an edifice, which with its baſes will be preſently ſunk and gone.

But what we would particularly remark is, that the excellent principles of the pſalmiſt, concerning God, are not mere ſpeculations, but truths from which he derives practical inferences; and he aims to extend their influence beyond private perſons, even to legiſlators and conquerors. One would think, conſidering the conduct of mankind, that the conſequences, which are drawn from the doctrines of which we have been ſpeaking, belong to none but to the dregs of the people; that law-givers and conquerors have a plan of morality peculiar to themſelves, and are above the rules to which other men muſt ſubmit. Our prophet had other notions. What are his maxims of policy? They are all included in theſe words: *Bleſſed is the nation whoſe God is the Lord, and the people whom he hath choſen for his own inheritance*, ver. 12. What are his military maxims? They are all included in theſe words: *There is no king ſaved by the multitude of an hoſt: a mighty man is not delivered by much ſtrength: An horſe is a vain thing for ſafety; neither ſhall he deliver any by his great ſtrength*, ver. 16, 17. Who propoſeth theſe maxims? A hermit, who never appeared on the theatre of the world? or a man deſtitute of the talents neceſſary to ſhine there? No: one of the wiſeſt of kings; one of the moſt bold and able generals; a man, whom God himſelf elected to govern his choſen people, and to command

thoſe

thoſe armies, which fought the moſt obſtinate battles, and gained the moſt complete victories. Were I to proceed in explaining the ſyſtem of the pſalmiſt, I might prove, that as he had a right to infer the doctrine of Providence from the works of nature, and that of the moral attributes of God from the works of creation; ſo, from the doctrines of the moral attributes of God, of Providence, and of the works of creation, he had a right to conclude, that no conquerors or law-givers could be truly happy, but thoſe who acted agreeably to the laws of the juſt and good Supreme. But I ſhall not enlarge on this article.

Permit me only to place in one point of view the different phraſes, by which the pſalmiſt deſcribes the Deity in this pſalm. "The earth is full of the goodneſs of the Lord. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hoſt of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the ſea together, as an heap: he layeth up the depth in ſtorehouſes. The Lord looketh from heaven: he beholdeth all the ſons of men. From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth. He faſhioneth their hearts alike; he conſidereth all their works," ver. 5—7, 13—15.

From theſe ſpeculative ideas of God, he derives the following rules of practice. "Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world ſtand in awe of him. Our ſoul waiteth for the Lord: he is our help and our ſhield. For our heart ſhall rejoice in him, becauſe we have truſted in his holy name. Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us according as we hope in thee," ver. 8, 20—22. How delightful it is, my brethren, to ſpeak of God, when one hath talents to ſpeak of him in ſuch a noble manner, and when one intends to promote the fear and the love of him, with an univerſal obedience to him, from all that is ſaid! How well it becomes

ſuch a man to praiſe God! The *praiſe* of the Lord *is comely* in the mouths of *upright* men.

II. Let us now apply the ſubject more immediately to the ſervice of this day. *To praiſe God* is a phraſe, which is ſometimes taken, in a particular ſenſe, for the exerciſe of a perſon, who, having received ſingular favours of God, delights in expreſſing his gratitude to him. This *praiſe is comely* in the mouth of an *upright* man, for four reaſons.

Firſt. Becauſe he arrangeth them in their true order, highly eſtimating what deſerves a high eſteem, and moſt highly eſtimating what deſerves the higheſt eſteem.

Secondly. Becauſe he employs all his benefits in the ſervice of his benefactor.

Thirdly. Becauſe, while he recounts his bleſſings, he diveſts himſelf of all merit, and aſcribes them only to the goodneſs of God from whom they proceed.

Fourthly. Becauſe he imitates that goodneſs and love, which inclined God to bleſs him in ſuch a manner.

I will affix to each of theſe reflections a ſingle word. *Praiſe*, or if you will, *gratitude*, *is comely for the upright*, becauſe it is *wiſe*, *real*, *humble*, and *magnanimous*: In theſe four reſpects, *praiſe is comely for the upright*. Theſe are the ſentiments, with which the holy ſacrament, of which we have taken this morning, ſhould inſpire us. Theſe are the moſt important reflections, with which we can cloſe this diſcourſe.

1. The gratitude of upright men is *wiſe*. The praiſe of the Lord becomes them well, becauſe, while they bleſs God for all their mercies, they arrange them in their proper order; they prize each according to its real worth, and that moſt of all which is of the greateſt value. It is a very mortifying reflection, my brethren, that the more we ſtudy ourſelves, the more clearly we perceive,

that

that the love of the world, and of ſenſible things, is the chief ſprings of all our actions and ſentiments. This diſagreeable truth is proved, not only by the nature of our vices, but even by the genius of our virtues; not only by the offences we commit againſt God, but by the very duties we perform in his ſervice.

A perſon ſo ungrateful, as not to diſcover any gratitude to God, when he beſtows temporal bleſſings on him, can ſcarcely be found. We praiſe God, when he delivers us from any public calamity, or from any domeſtic adverſity; when he recovers us from dangerous illneſs; when he raiſeth us up an unexpected friend, or a protector, who aſſiſts us; when he ſends us ſome proſperity, which renders life more eaſy. In ſuch caſes as theſe, we render an homage to God, that cannot be refuſed without ingratitude.

But we are extremely blameable, when, while we feel the value of theſe bleſſings, we remain inſenſible of the worth of other bleſſings, which are infinitely more valuable, and which merit infinitely more gratitude. A bleſſing, that directly regards the ſoul, is more valuable than one which regards only the body. A bleſſing, that regards our eternal happineſs, is of greater worth, than one which influenceth only the happineſs of this life. Whence is it then, that, being ſo ſenſible of bleſſings of the firſt kind, we are ſo little affected with thoſe of the laſt? How comes it to paſs, that we are ſo full of gratitude, when God gives the ſtate ſome ſignal victory; when he proſpers its trade; when he ſtrengthens the bonds, that unite it to powerful and faithful allies; and ſo void of it, while he continues to grant it the greateſt bleſſing that a ſociety of rational creatures can enjoy, I mean a liberty to ſerve God according to the dictates of our own conſciences? Whence is it, that we are ſo very thankful to God for preſerving our lives from the dangers

dangers that daily threaten them; and so little thankful for his miraculous patience with us, to which it is owing, that, after we have hardened our hearts against his voice one year, he invites us another year; after we have falsified our promises made on one solemnity, he calls us to another solemnity, and giveth us new opportunities of being more faithful to him? Whence comes this difference? Follow it to its source. Does it not proceed from what we just now said? Is not love of the world, and of sensible things, the grand spring of our actions and sentiments? The world, the world; lo! this is the touchstone, by which we judge of good and evil!

An *upright* man judgeth in another manner: he will, indeed, bless God for all his benefits; but as he knows how to arrange them, so he knows how to prize each according to its worth, and how to apportion his esteem to the real value of them all.

According to such an estimation, what ought not our gratitude to God be to-day, my dear brethren! We may assure ourselves with the utmost truth, that had the Lord united in our houses to-day pleasures, grandeurs, and dignities; had he promised each of us a life longer than that of a patriarch; a family as happy as that of Job, after his misfortunes; glory as great as that of Solomon; he would have bestowed nothing equal to that blessing, which he gave us this morning. He forgave those sins, which, had they taken their natural course, would have occasioned endless remorse, and would have plunged us into everlasting misery and woe. A peace was *shed abroad* in our consciences, which gave us a foretaste of heaven. He excited hopes, that absorbed our souls in their grandeur. Let us say all in one word: he gave us his Son. "He that spared not his own Son, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom. viii. 32.

2. The

2. The gratitude of upright men is *real*. The praiſe of the Lord becomes them, becauſe, while they praiſe God for his benefits, they live to the glory of their benefactor. Every gift of God furniſheth us with both a motive and a mean of obedience to him. It is an exceſs of ingratitude to make a contrary uſe of his gifts, and to turn the benefits that we receive, againſt the benefactor from whom we receive them. What gifts are they, by which God hath moſt diſtinguiſhed us? Thee he hath diſtinguiſhed by a penetrating genius, which renders the higheſt objects, the deepeſt myſteries, acceſſible to thee. Wo be to thee! if thou employ this gift to invent arguments againſt the truths of religion, and to find out ſophiſms that befriend infidelity. An *upright* man devotes this gift to his benefactor; he avails himſelf of his genius, to diſcover the folly of ſceptical ſophiſms, and to demonſtrate the truth of religion. On thee he hath beſtowed an aſtoniſhing memory. Wo be to thee! if thou uſe it to retain the pernicious maxims of the world. An *upright* man dedicates this gift to his benefactor; he employs his memory in retaining the excellent leſſons of equity, charity, and patience, which the holy Spirit hath taught him in the ſcriptures. To thee he hath given an authoritative elocution, to which every hearer is forced to bow. Wo be to thee! if thou apply this rare talent to ſeduce the minds, and to deprave the hearts, of mankind. An *upright* man devotes this bleſſing to the ſervice of his benefactor; he uſeth his eloquence to free the minds of men from error, and their lives from vice. Towards thee God hath exerciſed a patience, which ſeems contrary to his uſual rules of conduct towards ſinners, and by which he hath abounded toward thee in forbearance and long-ſuffering. Wo be to thee! if thou turn this bleſſing into an opportunity of violating the commands of God; if

thine obſtinacy run parallel with his patience, and if, *because ſentence againſt an evil work is not executed ſpeedily*, thy *heart* be *fully ſet* in thee *to do evil*, Eccl. viii. 11. An *upright* man devotes this bleſſing to his benefactor's ſervice. From the patience of God he derives motives of repentance. How eaſily might this article be enlarged! how fruitful in inſtruction would it be on this ſolemnity! But we proceed.

3. Gratitude to God well becomes an upright man, becauſe it is *humble*; becauſe an upright man, by publiſhing the gifts of God's grace, diveſts himſelf of himſelf, and attributes them wholly to the goodneſs of him from whom they came. Far from us be a profane mixture of the real grandeurs of the Creator with the fanciful grandeurs of creatures! Far be thoſe praiſes, in which he who offers them always finds, in his own excellence, the motives that induced the Lord to beſtow his benefits on him!

Two reflections always exalt the gifts of God in the eyes of an upright man; a reflection on his meanneſs, and a reflection on his unworthineſs; and it is with this comelineſs of humility, if I may venture to call it ſo, that I wiſh to engage you to praiſe God for the bleſſings of this day.

1. Meditate on your *meanneſs*. Contraſt yourſelves with God, who gives himſelf to you to-day in ſuch a tender manner. How ſoon is the capacity of man abſorbed in the works and attributes of God! Conceive, if thou be capable, the grandeur of a Being, who *made the heavens by his word, and all the hoſt of them by the breath of his mouth*. Think, if thou be capable of thinking, of the glory of a Being, who exiſted from all eternity, whoſe underſtanding is infinite, whoſe power is irreſiſtible, whoſe will is above controul. Behold him filling the whole univerſe with his preſence. Behold him in the palace of his

his glory, *inhabiting the praises* of the bleſſed, Pſal. xxii. 3. ſurrounded by thouſand thouſands, and by ten thouſand times ten thouſand angels, who excel in ſtrength, and who delight to fly at the firſt ſignal of his will. Thou human ſoul! contemplate this object, and recover thy reaſon. What art thou? What was thine origin? What is thine end? Thou diminutive atom! great only in thine own eyes; behold thyſelf in thy true point of view. Duſt! aſhes! putrefaction! glorious only at the tribunal of thine own pride; diveſt thyſelf of the tawdry grandeur in which thou loveſt to array thyſelf. Thou vapour! thou dream! thou exhalation of the earth! evaporating in the air, and having no other conſiſtence than what thine own imagination gives thee; behold thy vanity and nothingneſs. Yet this dream, this exhalation, this vapour, this duſt, and aſhes, and putrefaction, this diminutive creature, is an object of the eternal care and love of its God. For thee, contemptible creature! the Lord ſtretched out the heavens; for thee he laid the foundation of the earth. Let us ſay more: For thee, contemptible creature! God formed the plan of redemption. What could determine the great Jehovah to communicate himſelf, in ſuch a tender and intimate manner, to ſo contemptible a creature as man? His goodneſs, his goodneſs alone.

Although a ſenſe of our meanneſs ſhould not terrify and confound us, yet it ſhould exclude arrogance, and excite lowly ſentiments: But what will our humility be, if we eſtimate the gifts of God's grace by an idea of our unworthineſs? Let each recollect the mortifying hiſtory of his own life. Remember, thou! thy fiery youth, in which, forgetting all the principles that thy pious parents had taught thee, thou didſt acknowledge no law but thine own paſſionate and capricious will. Remember, thou! that period, in which

thy

thy heart being infatuated with one object, and wholly employed about it, thou didst make it thine idol, and didst sacrifice to it thine honour, thy duty, thy God. Recollect, thou! the cruel use, that for many years thou didst make of thy credit, thy riches, thy rank, when, being devoured with self-love, thou wast insensible to the voice of the widow and the orphan, and to a number of distressed people, who solicited relief. Remember, thou! that fatal hour, the recollection of which ought to make thy *head waters, and thine eyes a fountain of tears*, Jer. ix. 1. that fatal hour, in which, God having put thee into the fiery trial of persecution, thou couldst not abide the proof. Like Peter, thou didst *not know* a disgraced Redeemer; thou didst cowardly abandon a persecuted church, and wast just on the point of abjuring thy religion. Let each of us so consider himself as he seems in the eyes of a holy God. A criminal worthy of the most rigorous punishments! Let each of us say to himself, Notwithstanding all this, it is I, guilty I; I, whose sins are more in number than the hairs on my head; it is I, who have been admitted this morning into the house of God; it is I, who have been invited this morning to that mystical repast, which sovereign wisdom itself prepared; it is I, who have been encouraged against the just fears, which the remembrance of my sins had excited, and have heard the voice of God, proclaiming in my conscience, *Fear not, thou worm Jacob*, Isa. xli. 14. It is I, who have been *abundantly satisfied with the fatness of the house* of God, and have *drunk of the river of his pleasures*, Psal. xxxvi. 8. What inclines God to indulge me in this manner? Goodness only! O surpassing and inconceivable goodness! thou shalt for ever be the object of my meditation and gratitude! "How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God!" ver. 7. These are sentiments that ought

ought to animate our praise to-day. Such *praise is comely for the upright.*

Finally, The gratitude of an upright man is *noble* and *magnanimous.* The praise of God well becomes the mouth of an upright man, because he takes the love of God to him for a pattern of his behaviour to his fellow creatures. St. Paul hath very emphatically expressed the happy change which the gospel produceth in true christians. "We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord," 2 Cor. iii. 18. Some commentators, instead of reading *we all beholding as in a glass,* as the expression is rendered in our translation, render the words, *we all becoming mirrors.* I will not undertake to prove that this is the meaning of the term: it is certainly the sense of the apostle.* He means to inform us, that the impression, which the evangelical display of

* The idea of *reflecting,* while one contemplates *the attributes of God,* is a very fine thought, and fully expressive of the benevolent effects which christianity produceth in its disciples; but Mr. Saurin, whose business as a christian minister was not with *the fine,* but *the true,* only meant, by what he said above, that it was agreeable to *the general design* of the apostle. Erasmus was the first who translated St. Paul's term *katoptrizomenoi* in speculo *repræsentantes.* Beza renders it, in speculo *intuentes;* and our French bibles have it, nous *contemplons* comme en un miroir. Our author was delighted with the ingenuity of Erasmus; however, he could not accede to his translation, because, 1. He could meet with no Greek author, cotemporary with St. Paul, who had used the term in the sense of Erasmus. 2. Because he could not perceive any connexion between that signification and the phrase *with open face.* He abode therefore by the usual reading. See Serm. Tom. ix. S. viii. My idea of an object pleases me, therefore it is a true idea of it, is contemptible logic; yet how many pretended articles of religion have arisen from this way of reasoning!

of the perfections of God makes on the souls of believers, engraves them on their minds, and renders them like mirrors, that reflect the rays, and the objects which are placed opposite to them, and represent their images. *They behold the glory of the Lord with open face. They are changed from glory to glory into the same image, even as by the spirit of the Lord.* I wish, my brethren, that the impression, which was made on you by the generosity and magnanimity of God, who loaded you this morning with his gracious benefits, may transform you to-day *into the same image from glory to glory.* I would animate you with this, the most noble, the most sublime, the most comfortable, way of praising God.

What gave you so much peace and pleasure this morning, in what God did for you? Was it the pardon of your sins? Imitate it; pardon your brethren. Was it his past forbearance with you? Imitate it; moderate that impatience which the ingratitude of your brethren excites in your minds. Was it that spirit of communication, which disposed a God, who is all-sufficient to his own happiness, to go out of himself, as it were, and to communicate his felicity to creatures? Imitate it; go out of those intrenchments of prosperity in which you lodge, and impart your benefits to your brethren. Was it the continual watchfulness of God for the salvation of your souls? Imitate it; exert yourselves for the salvation of the souls of your brethren; suffer not those, who are united to you by all the ties of nature, society, and religion, to perish through your lukewarmness and negligence. While you triumphantly exclaim, on this solemn festival, *Let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation!* Psal. xcv. 1. remember your persecuted brethren, to whom God refuseth this pleasure; remember *the ways of Zion*, that *mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts*, Lam. i. 4.

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My brethren, how pleasing is a christian festival! How comfortable the institution, to which we were this morning called! But I remember here a saying of Jesus Christ to his apostles, *I have other sheep which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd*, John x. 16. Alas! we also have sheep in another fold. When shall we have the comfort of bringing them into this? Ye divided families! who are present in this assembly, when will you be united? Ye children of the reformation! whom the misfortunes of the times have torn from us; ye dear parts of ourselves! when will you come to us? When will you be re-gathered to the flock of the great *shepherd and bishop of our souls?* When will ye shed in our assemblies tears of repentance, for having lived so long without a church, without sacraments, without public worship? When will ye shed tears of joy for having recovered these advantages?

Great God! Thou great *God who hidest thyself!* is it to extinguish, or to enflame our zeal, that thou delayest the happy period? Are our hopes suspended or confounded? God grant, my dear brethren, that the *praise*, which we render to the Lord for all his benefits, may obtain their continuance and increase! And God grant, while he giveth us our *lives for a prey*, Jer. xxi. 9. that those of our brethren may be given us also! To him be honour and glory for ever! Amen.

SERMON III.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE CHURCH.

ROMANS xiv. 7, 8.

None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For, whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or, whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.

THESE words are a general maxim, which St. Paul lays down for the decision of a particular controversy. We cannot well enter into the apostle's meaning, unless we understand the particular subject, which led him to express himself in this manner. Our first reflections, therefore, will tend to explain the subject, and afterward we will extend our meditations to greater objects. We will attend to the text in that point of view, in which those christians are most interested, who have repeatedly engaged to devote themselves wholly to Jesus Christ; to consecrate to him through life, and to commit to him at death, not only with submission, but also with joy, those souls, over which he hath acquired the noblest right. Thus shall we verify, in the most pure and elevated of all senses, this saying of the apostle, *None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For, whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or, whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.*

St. Paul proposed in the text, and in some of the preceding and following verses, to establish the doctrine of toleration. By toleration, we mean, that disposition of a christian, which, on a

principle of benevolence, inclines him to hold communion with a man, who, through weakness of mind, mixeth with the truths of religion some errors, that are not entirely incompatible with it; and with the new testament worship some ceremonies, which are unsuitable to its elevation and simplicity, but which, however, do not destroy its essence.

Retain every part of this definition, for each is essential to the subject defined. I say, that he, who exerciseth toleration, acts on a principle of benevolence; for were he to act on a principle of indolence, or of contempt for religion, his disposition of mind, far from being a virtue worthy of praise, would be a vice fit only for execration. Toleration, I say, is to be exercised towards him only, who errs through *weakness of mind*; for he, who persists in his error through arrogance, and for the sake of rending the church, deserves rigorous punishment. I say, further, that he, who exerciseth toleration, doth not confine himself to praying for him, who is the object of it, and to endeavouring to reclaim him; he proceeds further, and *holds communion* with him; that is to say, he assists at the same religious exercises, and partakes of the Lord's supper at the same table. Without this communion, can we consider him, whom we pretend to tolerate, as a brother in the sense of St. Paul? I add, finally, *erroneous sentiments*, which are tolerated, *must be compatible with the great truths of religion; and observances*, which are tolerated, *must not destroy the essence of evangelical worship*, although they are incongruous with its simplicity and glory. How can I assist in a service, which, in my opinion, is an insult on the God whom I adore? How can I approach the table of the Lord with a man, who rejects all the mysteries, which God exhibits there? and so of the rest.

Retain,

Retain, then, all the parts of this definition, and you will form a juſt notion of *toleration*.

This moderation, always neceſſary among chriſtians, was particularly ſo in the primitive ages of chriſtianity. The firſt churches were compoſed of two ſorts of proſelytes; ſome of them were born of Jewiſh parents, and had been educated in Judaiſm, others were converted from paganiſm; and both, generally ſpeaking, after they had embraced chriſtianity, preſerved ſome traces of the religions which they had renounced. Some of them retained ſcruples, from which juſt notions of chriſtian liberty, it ſhould ſeem, might have freed them. They durſt not eat ſome foods which God gave for the nouriſhment of mankind, I mean, the fleſh of animals, and they ate only *herbs*. They ſet apart certain *days* for devotional exerciſes: not from that wiſe motive, which ought to engage every rational man to take a portion of his life from the tumult of the world, in order to conſecrate it to the ſervice of his Creator; but from I know not what notion of pre-eminence, which they attributed to ſome days above others. Thus far all are agreed in regard to the deſign of St. Paul in the text.

Nor is there any difficulty in determining which of the two orders of chriſtians, of whom we ſpoke, St. Paul conſiders as an object of toleration; whether that claſs which came from the Gentiles, or that which came from the Jews. It is plain the laſt is intended. Every body knows that the law of Moſes ordained a great number of feaſts under the penalty of the great anathema. It was very natural for the converted Jews to retain a fear of incurring that penalty, which followed the infraction of thoſe laws, and to carry their veneration for thoſe feſtivals too far.

There was one whole ſect among the Jews, that abſtained entirely from the fleſh of animals; they

they were the *Essenes*. Josephus expressly affirms this; and Philo assures us, that their tables were free from every thing that had blood, and were served with only bread, salt, and hyssop. As the Essenes professed a severity of manners, which had some likeness to the morality of Jesus Christ, it is probable, many of them embraced christianity, and in it interwove a part of the peculiarities of their own sect.

I do not think, however, that St. Paul had any particular view to the Essenes; at least, we are not obliged to suppose, that his views were confined to them. All the world know, that Jews have an aversion to blood. A Jew, exact in his religion, does not eat flesh now-a-days with christians, lest the latter should not have taken sufficient care to discharge the blood. When, therefore, St. Paul describes converted Jews by their scrupulosity in regard to the eating of blood, he does not speak of what they did in their own families, but of what they practised, when they were invited to a convivial repast with people, who thought themselves free from the prohibition of eating blood, whether they were Gentiles yet involved in the darkness of paganism, or Gentile converts to christianity. Thus far our subject is free from difficulty.

The difficulty lies in the connexion of the maxim in the text with the end, which St. Paul proposeth in establishing it. What relation is there between christian toleration and this maxim, *None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself?* How doth it follow from this principle, *whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or, whether we die, we die unto the Lord;* how doth it follow from this principle, that we ought to tolerate those, who, through the weakness of their minds, mix some errors with the grand truths of christianity, and with the new testament worship some ceremonies, which obscure its simplicity, and debase its glory? The

The ſolution lies in the connexion of the text with the foregoing verſes, and particularly with the fourth verſe, *who art thou, that judgest another man's ſervant?* To *judge*, in this place, does not ſignify to diſcern, but to *condemn*. The word has this meaning in a hundred paſſages of the new teſtament. I confine myſelf to one paſſage for example. "If we judge ourſelves, we ſhould not be judged," 1 Cor. xi. 31. that is to ſay, if we would condemn ourſelves at the tribunal of repentance, after we have partaken unworthily of the Lord's ſupper, we ſhould not be condemned at the tribunal of divine juſtice. In like manner, *who art thou, that judgest another man's ſervant?* is as much as to ſay, *who art thou that condemnest?* St. Paul meant to make the chriſtians of Rome underſtand, that it belonged only to the ſovereign of the church to abſolve or to condemn, as he ſaw fit.

But who is the ſupreme head of the church? Jeſus Chriſt, Jeſus Chriſt, who, with his Father, is *over all, God bleſſed for ever*, Rom. ix. 5. Jeſus Chriſt, by dying for the church, acquired this ſupremacy, and in virtue of it all true chriſtians render him the homage of adoration. All this is clearly expreſſed by our apoſtle, and gives us an occaſion to treat of one of the moſt abſtruſe points of chriſtian theology.

That Jeſus Chriſt is the ſupreme head of the church, according to the doctrine of St. Paul, is expreſſed by the apoſtle in the moſt clear and explicit manner; for after he hath ſaid, in the words of the text, *whether we live, or die, we are the Lord's*, he adds immediately, *for to this end Chriſt both died, and roſe, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.*

That this Jeſus, *whose*, the apoſtle ſays, *we are*, is God, the apoſtle does not permit us to doubt; for he confounds the expreſſions *to eat to the Lord*, and *to give God thanks*; to *ſtand be-*

fore the judgment seat of Christ, and to *give account of himself to God*; to be *Lord both of the dead and living*, ver. 6, 10, 12. and this majestic language, which would be blasphemy in the mouth of a simple creature, *As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God*, ver. 11.

Finally, That Jesus Christ acquired that supremacy by his sufferings and death, in virtue of which all true christians render him the homage of adoration, the apostle establisheth, if possible, still more clearly. This appears by the words just now cited, *to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living*, ver. 8, 11. To the same purpose the apostle speaks in the epistle to the Philippians, "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath also highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." This is the sovereignty which Jesus Christ acquired by dying for the church.

But the most remarkable, and at the same time the most difficult article on this subject, is this. These texts, which seem to establish the divinity of Christ in a manner so clear, furnish the greatest objection, that hath ever been proposed against it. True, say the enemies of this doctrine, Jesus Christ is God, since the scripture commands us to worship him. But his divinity is an acquired divinity; since that supremacy, which entitles him to adoration as God, is not an essential, but an acquired supremacy. Now, that this supremacy is acquired, is indubitable, since the texts, that have been cited, expresly declare, that it is a fruit of his sufferings and death. We have two arguments to offer in reply. 1. If

1. If it were demonstrated, that the supremacy established in the forecited texts was only acquired, and not essential, it would not therefore follow, that Jesus Christ had no other supremacy belonging to him in common with the Father and the holy Spirit. We are commanded to worship Jesus Christ, not only because he died for us, but also because he is eternal and almighty, the author of all beings that exist; and because he hath all the perfections of Deity, as we can prove by other passages, not necessary to be repeated here.

2. Nothing hinders that the true God, who, as the true God, merits our adoration, should acquire every day new rights over us, in virtue of which we have new motives of rendering those homages to him, which we acknowledge he always infinitely merited. Always when God bestows a new blessing, he acquireth a new right. What was Jacob's opinion, when he made this vow? "If God will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God," Gen. xxviii. 20, &c. Did the patriarch mean, that he had no other reason for regarding the Lord as his God, than this favour, which he asked of him? No such thing. He meant, that to a great many reasons, which bound him to devote himself to God, the favour which he asked would add a new one. It would be easy to produce a long list of examples of this kind. At present the application of this one should suffice. Jesus Christ, who, as supreme God, hath natural rights over us, hath also acquired rights, because he hath deigned to clothe himself with our flesh, in which he died to redeem us. *None of us is his own*, we are all his, not only because he is our Creator, but because he is also our Redeemer. He hath a supremacy over us peculiar to himself, and distinct from that,

which

which he hath in common with the Father and the holy Spirit.

To return then to our principal subject, from which this long digression hath diverted us. This Jesus, who is the supreme head of the church; this Jesus, to whom all the members of the church are subject; willeth that we should tolerate, and he himself hath tolerated, those, who, having in other cases an upright conscience, and a sincere intention of submitting their reason to all his decisions, and their hearts to all his commands, cannot clearly see, that christian liberty includes a freedom from the observation of certain feasts, and from the distinction of certain foods. If the sovereign of the church tolerate them, who err in this manner, by what right do you, who are only simple subjects, undertake to condemn them? "Who art thou, that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and, whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's. Let us not therefore judge one another any more." Let us, *who are strong, bear the infirmities of the weak.*

This is the design of St. Paul in the words of my text, in some of the preceding, and in some of the following verses. Can we proceed without remarking, or without lamenting, the blindness of those christians, who, by their intolerance to their brethren, seem to have chosen for their model those members of the church of Rome, who violate the rights of toleration in the most cruel manner? We are not speaking of those sanguinary men, who aim at illuminating people's minds with the light of fires, and faggots, which they kindle against all who reject their systems. Our tears, and our blood, have not assuaged their

rage;

rage; how can we then think to appeaſe it by our exhortations? Let us not ſolicit the wrath of heaven againſt theſe perſecutors of the church; let us leave to the ſouls of them, who were ſlain for the word of God, to cry, *How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them, that dwell on the earth?* Rev. vi. 10.

But, ye inteſtine diviſions! Thou ſpirit of faction! Ye theological wars! how long will ye be let looſe among us? Is it poſſible, that chriſtians, who bear the name of reformed, chriſtians united by the bond of their faith in the belief of the ſame doctrines, and, if I may be allowed to ſpeak ſo, chriſtians united by the very efforts of their enemies to deſtroy them; can they violate, after all, thoſe laws of toleration, which they have ſo often preſcribed to others, and againſt the violation of which they have remonſtrated with ſo much wiſdom and ſucceſs? Can they convoke eccleſiaſtical aſſemblies, can they draw up canons, can they denounce excommunications and anathemas againſt thoſe, who, retaining with themſelves the leading truths of chriſtianity and of the reformation, think differently on points of ſimple ſpeculation, on queſtions purely metaphyſical, and, if I may ſpeak the whole, on matters ſo abſtruſe, that they are alike indeterminable by them, who exclude members from the communion of Jeſus Chriſt, and by thoſe who are excluded? O ye ſons of the reformation! how long will you counteract your own principles! how long will you take pleaſure in increaſing the number of thoſe, who breathe only your deſtruction, and move only to deſtroy you! O ye ſubjects of the ſovereign of the church! how long will you encroach on the rights of your ſovereign, dare to condemn thoſe whom he abſolves, and to reject thoſe whom his generous benevolence tolerates! "Who art thou, that judgeſt another man's ſervant?

vant? for none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For, whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and, whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's."

What we have said shall suffice for the subject, which occasioned the maxim in the text. The remaining time I devote to the consideration of the general sense of this maxim. It lays before us the condition, the engagements, the inclination, and the felicity of a christian. What is the felicity of a christian, what is his inclination, what are his engagements, what is his condition? They are *not to be his own*; but to say, *whether I live, or die, I am the Lord's*. The whole, that we shall propose to you, is contained in these four articles.

I. The text lays before us the primitive *condition* of a christian. It is a condition of *dependence*. "None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself."

None of us *liveth* to himself, *for whether we live, we live unto the Lord*. What do we possess, during our abode upon earth, which doth not absolutely depend on him, who placed us here? Our existence is not ours; our fortune is not ours; our reputation is not ours; our virtue is not ours; our reason is not ours; our health is not ours; our life is not ours.

Our *existence* is not ours. A few years ago we found ourselves in this world, constituting a very inconsiderable part of it. A few years ago the world itself was nothing. The will of God alone hath made a being of this nothing, as he can make this being a nothing, whenever he pleaseth to do so.

Our *fortune* is not ours. The most opulent persons often see their *riches make themselves wings, and fly away*. Houses, the best established, disappear in an instant. We have seen a

Job,

Job, who had poſſeſſed *seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and servants without number;* we have ſeen the man, who had been *the greatest of all the men of the east*, lying on a dunghill, retaining nothing of his proſperity but a ſorrowful remembrance, which aggravated the adverſities that followed it.

Our *reputation* is not ours. One ſingle frailty ſometimes tarniſheth a life of the moſt unſullied beauty. One moment's abſence ſometimes debaſeth the glory of the moſt profound politician, of the moſt expert general, of a ſaint of the higheſt order. A very diminutive fault will ſerve to render contemptible, yea, infamous, the man who committed it; and to make him tremble at the thought of appearing before men, who have no other advantage over him than that of having committed the ſame offence more fortunately; I mean of having concealed the commiſſion of it from the eyes of his fellow creatures.

Our *virtue* is not ours. Want of opportunity is often the cauſe why one, who openly profeſſeth chriſtianity, is not an apoſtate; another an adulterer; another a murderer.

Our *reason* is not ours. While we poſſeſs it, we are ſubject to diſtractions, to abſence of thought, to ſuſpenſion of intelligence, which render us entirely incapable of reflection; and, what is ſtill more mortifying to human nature, they, whoſe geniuſes are the moſt tranſcendant and ſublime, ſometimes become either melancholy or mad; like Nebuchadnezzar they ſink into beaſts, and browſe like them on the herbage of the field.

Our *health* is not ours. The catalogue of thoſe infirmities which deſtroy it, (I ſpeak of thoſe which we know, and which mankind by a ſtudy of five or ſix thouſand years have diſcovered) makes whole volumes. A catalogue of thoſe

which

which are unknown, would probably make larger volumes yet.

Our *life* is not ours. Winds, waves, heat, cold, aliments, vegetables, animals, nature, and each of its component parts, conspire to deprive us of it. Not one of those, who have entered this church, can demonstrate that he shall go out of it alive. Not one of those, who compose this assembly, even of the youngest and strongest, can assure himself of one year, one day, one hour, one moment of life. *None of us liveth to himself;* for, *if we live, we are the Lord's.*

Further, *No man dieth to himself. If we die, we are the Lord's.* How absolute soever the dominion of one man over another may be, there is a moment, in which both are on a level; that moment comes when we die. Death delivers a slave from the power of a tyrant, under whose rigour he hath spent his life in groans. Death terminates all the relations, that subsist between men in this life. But the relation of dependence, which subsists between the Creator and his creatures, is an eternal relation. That world, into which we enter when we die, is a part of his empire, and is as subject to his laws as that into which we entered when we were born. During this life, the Supreme Governor hath riches and poverty, glory and ignominy, cruel tyrants and clement princes, rains and droughts, raging tempests and refreshing breezes, air wholesome and air infected, famine and plenty, victories and defeats, to render us happy or miserable. After death, he hath absolution and condemnation, a tribunal of justice and a tribunal of mercy, angels and devils, *a river of pleasure* and *a lake burning with fire and brimstone*, hell with its horrors and heaven with its happiness, to render us happy or miserable as he pleaseth.

These reflections are not quite sufficient to make us feel all our *dependence*. Our vanity is mortified,

mortified, when we remember, that what we enjoy is not ours; but it is sometimes, as it were, indemnified by observing the great means, that God employs to deprive us of our enjoyments. God hath, in general, excluded this extravagant motive to pride. He hath attached our felicity to one fibre, to one caprice, to one grain of sand, to objects the least likely, and seemingly the least capable, of influencing our destiny.

On what is your high idea of yourself founded? On your genius? And what is necessary to reduce the finest genius to that state of melancholy or madness, of which I just now spoke? Must the earth quake? Must the sea overflow its banks? Must the heavens kindle into lightning and resound in thunder? Must the elements clash, and the powers of nature be shaken? No; there needs nothing but the displacing of one little fibre in your brain!

On what is your high idea of yourself founded? On that self-complacence, which fortune, rank, and pleasing objects, that surround you, seem to contribute to excite? And what is necessary to dissipate your self-complacence? Must the earth tremble? Must the sea overflow its banks? Must heaven arm itself with thunder and lightning? Must all nature be shaken? No; one caprice is sufficient. An appearance, under which an object presents itself to us, or rather, a colour, that our imagination lends it, banisheth self-complacence, and, lo! the man just now agitated with so much joy, is fixed in a black, a deep despair!

On what is your lofty idea of yourself founded? On your health? But what is necessary to deprive you of your health? Earthquakes? Armies? Inundations? Must nature return to its chaotic state? No; one grain of sand is sufficient! That grain of sand, which in another position was next to nothing to you, and was re-

ally nothing to your felicity, becomes in its present position a punishment, a martyrdom, a hell!

People sometimes speculate the nature of those torments, which divine justice reserves for the wicked. They are less concerned to avoid the pains of hell, than to discover wherein they consist. They ask, what fuel can supply a fire, that will never be extinguished. Vain researches! The principle in my text is sufficient to give me frightful ideas of hell. We are in a state of entire *dependence* on the Supreme Being; and to repeat it again, one single grain of sand, which is nothing in itself, may become in the hands of the Supreme Being, a punishment, a martyrdom, a hell in regard to us. What *dependence! Whether we live, or whether we die, we are the Lord's.* This is the primitive *condition* of a christian.

II. Our text points out the *engagements* of a christian. Let us abridge our reflections. Remark the state in which Jesus Christ found us; what he performed to deliver us from it; and under what conditions we enter on and enjoy this deliverance.

1. In what *state* did Jesus Christ find us, when he came into our world? I am sorry to say, the affected delicacy of the world, which increaseth as its irregularities multiply, obligeth me to suppress part of a metaphorical description, that the holy Spirit hath given us in the sixteenth chapter of Ezekiel. "Thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite," saith he to the church. "When thou wast born, no eye pitied thee, to do any thing unto thee; but thou wast cast out in the open air, to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born. I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, and I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live. I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness; yea, I swear unto thee,

thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, and thou becameſt mine," ver. 3, &c.

Let us leave the metaphor, and let us confine our attention to the meaning. When Jeſus Chriſt came into the world, in what ſtate did he find us? Deſcended from a long train of anceſtors in rebellion againſt the laws of God, fluctuating in our ideas, ignorant of our origin and end, blinded by our prejudices, infatuated by our paſſions, *having no hope, and being without God in the world*, Eph. ii. 12. condemned to die, and reſerved for eternal flames. From this ſtate Jeſus Chriſt delivered us, and brought us into *the glorious liberty of the ſons of God*, Rom. viii. 21. in order to enable us to participate the felicity of the bleſſed God, by making us *partakers of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. By a deliverance ſo glorious, doth not the deliverer obtain peculiar rights over us?

Remark, further, on what *conditions* Jeſus Chriſt hath freed you from your miſeries, and you will perceive, that *ye are not your own.* What means the morality that Jeſus Chriſt enjoined in his goſpel? What vows were made for each of you at your baptiſm? What haſt thou promiſed at the Lord's table? In one word, to what authority didſt thou ſubmit by embracing the goſpel? Didſt thou ſay to Jeſus Chriſt, Lord! I will be partly thine, and partly mine own? To thee I will ſubmit the opinions of my mind; but the irregular diſpoſitions of my heart I will reſerve to myſelf. I will conſent to renounce my vengeance; but thou ſhalt allow me to retain my Dalilah and my Druſilla. For thee I will quit the world and diſſipating pleaſures; but thou ſhalt indulge the viſionary and capricious flow of my humour. On a chriſtian feſtival I will riſe into tranſports of devotion; my countenance ſhall emit rays of a divine flame; my eyes ſhall ſparkle with ſeraphic fire, *my heart and my fleſh ſhall*

shall cry out for the living God, Pſal. lxxxiv. 2. but when I return to the world, I will ſink into the ſpirit of the men of it; I will adopt their maxims, ſhare their pleaſures, immerſe myſelf in their converſation; and thus I will be alternately *cold and hot*, Rev. iii. 15. a chriſtian and a heathen, an angel and a devil. Is this your idea of chriſtianity? Undoubtedly it is that, which many of our hearers have formed; and which they take too much pains to prove, by the whole courſe of their converſation. But this is not the idea which the inſpired writers have given us of chriſtianity; it is not that, which, after their example, we have given you. Him only I acknowledge for a true chriſtian, who is *not his own*, at leaſt, who continually endeavours to eradicate the remains of ſin, that reſiſt the empire of Jeſus Chriſt. Him alone I acknowledge for a true chriſtian, who can ſay with St. Paul, although not in the ſame degree, yet with equal ſincerity, *I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life, which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me*, Gal. ii. 20.

Conſider, thirdly, what it coſt Jeſus Chriſt to deliver you from your wretched ſtate. Could our freedom have been procured by a few emotions of benevolence, or by an act of ſupreme power? In order to deliver us from our *griefs*, it was neceſſary for him to *bear* them; to terminate our *ſorrows*, he muſt *carry* them; (according to the language of a prophet) to deliver us from the ſtrokes of divine juſtice, he muſt be *ſtricken and ſmitten of God*, Iſa. liii. 4. I am aware, that one of the moſt deplorable infirmities of the human mind, is to become inſenſible to the moſt affecting objects by becoming familiar with them. The glorified ſaints, we know, by contemplating the ſufferings of the Saviour of

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the world, behold objects, that excite eternal adorations of the mercy of *him, who loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood, and made them kings, and priests unto God his Father*, Rev. i. 5, 6. but in our preſent ſtate, the propoſing of theſe objects to us in a courſe of ſermons is ſufficient to weary us. However, I affirm, that, if we have not been affected with what Chriſt hath done for our ſalvation, it hath not been owing to our thinking too much, but to our not thinking enough, and perhaps to our never having thought of the ſubject once, with ſuch a profound attention as its intereſting nature demands.

Bow thyſelf towards the myſtical ark, chriſtian! and fix thine eyes on the mercy-ſeat. Revolve in thy meditation the aſtoniſhing, I had almoſt ſaid, the incredible hiſtory of thy Saviour's love. Go to Bethlehem, and behold him, *who upholdeth all things by the word of his power*, (I uſe the language of an apoſtle) him, who thought it no uſurpation of the rights of the Deity to be *equal with God*; behold him *humbling himſelf*, (I uſe here the words of St. Paul, Heb. i. 3. Phil. ii. 8. his words are more emphatical ſtill.) Behold him *annihilated**; for, although the child, who was born in a ſtable, and laid in a manger, was a real being, yet he may ſeem to be *annihilated* in regard to the degrading circumſtances, which veiled and concealed his natural dignity; behold him *annihilated*, by *taking upon him the form of a ſervant*. Follow him through the whole courſe of his life; *he went about doing good*, Acts x. 38. and expoſed himſelf in every place to inconveniences and miſeries, through the abundance of his benevolence and love. Paſs to Gethſemane; behold his agony; ſee him as

* Videtur hic alludere ad Dan. ix. 26. Ubi dicitur Meſſias exinaniendus, ut ei nihil ſuperſit. i. e. quaſi in nihilum ſit redigendus. *Poli Synops.* in loc.

the Redeemer of mankind contending with the Judge of the whole earth; in an agony, in which Jesus resisted with only *prayers and supplications, strong crying and tears*, Heb. v. 7. an agony preparatory to an event still more terrible, the bare idea of which terrified and troubled him, made *his sweat as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground*, Luke xxii. 44. and produced this prayer so fruitful in controversies in the schools, and so penetrating and affecting; so fruitful in motives to obedience, devotion, and gratitude, in truly christian hearts, *O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt*, Matt. xxvi. 44. Go further yet, christian! and after thou hast seen all the sufferings, which Jesus Christ endured in going from the garden to the cross, ascend Calvary with him; stop on the summit of the hill, and on that theatre behold the most astonishing of all the works of Almighty God. See this Jesus, *the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person*, Heb. i. 3. see him stripped, fastened to an accursed tree, confounded with two thieves, nailed to the wood, surrounded with executioners and tormentors, having lost, during this dreadful period, that sight of the comfortable presence of his Father, which constituted all his joy, and being driven to exclaim, *My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?* Matt. xxvii. 40. But behold him, amidst all these painful sufferings, firmly supporting his patience by his love, resolutely enduring all these punishments, from those motives of benevolence, which first engaged him to submit to them, ever occupied with the prospect of saving those poor mortals, for whose sake he descended into this world, fixing his eyes on that world of believers, which his cross would subdue to his government, according to his own saying, *I, if I be lifted up from earth, will draw*

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all men unto me, John xii. 32. Can we help feeling the force of that motive, which the ſcripture propoſeth in ſo many places, and ſo very emphatically in theſe words. *The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us*, 2 Cor. v. 14. that is to ſay, engageth and attacheth us cloſely to him; *The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they, which live, ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto him, which died for them, and roſe again.* Yea, *The love of Chriſt forceth us*, when we think what he hath done for us.

III. My third article, which ſhould treat of the *inclination* of a chriſtian, is naturally contained in the ſecond, that is, in that which treats of his *engagements*. To devote ourſelves to a maſter, who hath carried his love to us ſo far; to devote ourſelves to him by fear and force; to ſubmit to his laws, becauſe he hath the power of precipitating thoſe into hell, who have the audacity to break them; to obey him on this principle only, this is a diſpoſition of mind as deteſtable as diſobedience itſelf, as hateful as open rebellion. The ſame arguments, which prove that a chriſtian is *not his own* by engagement, prove that he is *not his own* by inclination. When, therefore, we ſhall have proved that this ſtate is his *felicity* alſo, we ſhall have finiſhed the plan of this diſcourſe.

IV. Can it be difficult to perſuade you on this article? Stretch your imaginations. Find, if you can, any circumſtance in life, in which it would be happier to reject chriſtianity, than to ſubmit to it.

Amidſt all the diſorders and confuſions, and (ſo to ſpeak) amidſt the univerſal chaos of the preſent world, it is delightful to belong to the Governor, who firſt formed the world, and who hath aſſured us, that he will diſplay the ſame power.

power in renewing it, which he displayed in creating it.

In the calamities of life, it is delightful to belong to the Master, who distributes them; who distributes them only for our good; who knows afflictions by experience; whose love inclines him to terminate our sufferings; and who continues them from the same principle of love, that inclines him to terminate them, when we shall have derived those advantages from them, for which they were sent.

During the persecutions of the church, it is delightful to belong to a Guardian, who can curb our persecutors, and controul every tyrant; who useth them for the execution of his own counsels; and who will break them in pieces with a rod of iron, when they can no longer contribute to the sanctifying of his servants.

Under a sense of our infirmities; when we are terrified with the purity of that morality, the equity of which we are obliged to own, even while we tremble at its severity; it is delightful to belong to a Judge, who doth not exact his rights with the utmost rigour; who *knoweth our frame*, Psal. ciii. 14. who pitieth our infirmities; and who assureth us, that *he will not break a bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax*, Matt. xii. 20.

When our passions are intoxicated, in those fatal moments, in which the desire of possessing the objects of our passions wholly occupies our hearts, and we consider them as our paradise, our gods; it is delightful, however incapable we may be of attending to it, to belong to a Lord who restrains and controuls us, because he loves us; and who refuseth to grant us what we so eagerly desire, because he would either preclude those terrible regrets, which penitents feel after the commission of great sins, or those more terrible torments, that are inseparable from final impenitence.

Under

Under a recollection of our rebellions, it is delightful to belong to a Parent, who will receive us favourably when we implore his clemency; who sweetens the bitterness of our remorse; who is touched with our regrets; who wipes away the tears, that the remembrance of our backslidings makes us shed; who *spareth us, as a man spareth his own son, that serveth him,* Mal. iii. 17.

In that empty void, into which we are often conducted, while we seem to enjoy the most solid establishments, the most exquisite pleasures, and the most brilliant honours, it is delightful to belong to a Patron, who reserves for us objects far better suited to our original excellence, and to the immensity of our desires. *To live to Jesus Christ* then, is the *felicity* of a christian.

But, if it be a felicity to belong to Jesus Christ while we *live*, it is a felicity incomparably greater to belong to him when we *die*. We will conclude this meditation with this article; and it is an article, that I would endeavour above all others to impress on your hearts, and to engage you to take home to your houses. But, unhappily, the subject of this article is one of those, which generally make the least impressions on the minds of christians. I know a great many christians, who place their happiness in *living to Jesus Christ*; but how few have love enough for him to esteem it a felicity to *die to him!* Not only is the number of those small, who experience such a degree of love to Christ; there are very few, who even comprehend what we mean on this subject. Some efforts of divine love resemble very accurate and refined reasonings. They ought naturally to be the most intelligible to intelligent creatures, and they are generally the least understood. Few people are capable of that attention, which takes the mind from every thing foreign from the object in contemplation, and fixeth

fixeth it not only on the subject, but also on that part, on that point of it, if I may be allowed to speak so, which is to be investigated and explained; so that, by a frailty which mankind cannot sufficiently deplore, precision confuseth our ideas, and light itself makes a subject dark. In like manner, there are some efforts of divine love, so detached from sense, so free from all sensible objects, so superior to even all the means, that religion useth to attract us to God, so eagerly aspiring after an union more close, more noble, and more tender, that the greatest part of christians, as I said before, are not only incapable of experiencing them, but they are also hard to be persuaded that there is any reality in what they have been told about them.

To be Jesus Christ's in the hour of death by *condition*, by *engagement*, and above all by *inclination*, is the only means of dying with delight. Without these, whatever makes our felicity while we live, will become our punishment when we die; whether it be a criminal object, or an innocent object, or even an object which God himself commandeth us to love.

Criminal objects will punish you. They will represent death to you as the messenger of an avenging God, who comes to drag you before a tribunal, where the Judge will examine and punish all your crimes. *Lawful* objects will distress you. Pleasant fields! convenient houses! we must forsake you. Natural relations! agreeable companions! faithful friends! we must give you up. From you, our dear children! who kindle in our hearts a kind of love, that agitates and inflames beings, when nature seems to render them incapable of heat and motion, we must be torn from you.

Religious objects, which we are commanded above all others to love, will contribute to our anguish in a dying bed, if they have confined our

love,

love, and rendered us too sensible to that kind of happiness which piety procures in this world; and if they have prevented our souls from rising into a contemplation of that blessed state, in which there will be no more temple, no more sacraments, no more gross and sensible worship. The man, who is too much attached to these things, is confounded at the hour of death. The land of love, to which he goes, is an unknown country to him; and as the borders of it, on which he stands, and on which alone his eyes are fixed, present only precipices to his view, fear and trembling surround his every step.

But a believer, who loves Jesus Christ with that kind of love, which made St. Paul exclaim, *The love of Christ constraineth us*, 2 Cor. v. 14. finds himself on the summit of his wishes at the approach of death. This believer, living in this world, resembles the son of a great king, whom some sad event tore from his royal parent in his cradle; who knows his parent only by the fame of his virtues; who has always a difficult, and often an intercepted correspondence with his parent; whose remittances, and favours from his parent, are always diminished by the hands through which they come to him. With what transport would such a son meet the moment appointed by his father for his return to his natural state!

I belong to God, (these are the sentiments of the believer, of whom I am speaking) I belong to God, not only by his sovereign dominion over me as a creature; not only by that right, which as a master, who hath redeemed his slave, he hath acquired over me; but I belong to God, because I love him, and because, I know, God alone deserves my highest esteem. The deep impressions, that his adorable perfections have made on my mind, make me impatient with every object, which intercepts my sight of him. I could not

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be content to abide any longer in this world, were he not to ordain my ſtay; and were I not to conſider his will as the only law of my conduct. But the law, that commands me to live, doth not forbid me to deſire to die. I conſider death as the period fixed for the gratifying of my moſt ardent wiſhes, the conſummation of my higheſt joy. "Whilſt I am at home in the body, I am abſent from the Lord," 2 Cor. v. 6. But it would be incomparably more delightful *to be abſent from the body, and to be present with the Lord*, ver. 8. And what can detain me on earth, when God ſhall condeſcend to call me to himſelf?

Not ye *criminal* objects! you I never loved; and although I have ſometimes ſuffered myſelf to be ſeduced by your deceitful appearances of pleaſure, yet I have been ſo ſeverely puniſhed by the tears that you have cauſed me to ſhed, and by the remorſe which you have occaſioned my conſcience to feel, that there is no reaſon to fear my putting you into the plan of my felicity.

Nor ſhall ye detain me, *lawful* objects! How ſtrong ſoever the attachments, that unite me to you, may be, you are only ſtreams of happineſs, and I am going to the fountain of felicity. You are only emanations of happineſs, and I am going to *the happy God*.

Neither ſhall ye, *religious* objects! detain me. You are only means, and death is going to conduct me to the end; you are only the road, to die is to arrive at home. True, I ſhall no more read thoſe excellent works, in which authors of the brighteſt genius have raiſed the truth from depths of darkneſs and prejudice, in which it had been buried, and placed it in the moſt lively point of view. I ſhall hear no more of thoſe ſermons, in which the preacher, animated by the holy ſpirit of God, attempts to elevate me above the preſent world. But I ſhall hear and contemplate

eternal

eternal wiſdom, and I ſhall diſcover in my commerce with it the views, the deſigns, the plans of my Creator; and I ſhall acquire more wiſdom in one moment by this mean, than I ſhould ever obtain by hearing the beſt compoſed ſermons, and by reading the beſt written books. True, I ſhall no more devote myſelf to you, cloſet exerciſes! holy meditations! aſpirings of a ſoul in ſearch of its God! crying, *Lord, I beseech thee shew me thy glory!* Exod. xxxiii. 18. Lord, diſſipate the dark thick cloud that conceals thee from my ſight! ſuffer me to approach that light, which hath hitherto been inacceſſible to me! But death is the diſſipation of clouds and darkneſs; it is an approach to perfect light; it takes me from my cloſet, and preſents me like a ſeraph at the foot of the throne of God and the Lamb.

True, I ſhall no more partake of you, ye holy ordinances of religion! ye ſacred ceremonies! that have conveyed ſo many conſolations into my ſoul; that have ſo amply afforded ſolidity and ſolace to the ties, which united my heart to my God; that have ſo often procured me a heaven on earth; but I quit you becauſe I am going to receive immediate effuſions of divine love, pleaſures at God's right hand for evermore, *fullness of joy in his presence*, Pſal. xvi. 11. I quit you becauſe . . . . . .

Alas! your hearts perhaps have eſcaped me, my brethren! perhaps theſe emotions, ſuperior to your piety, are no longer the ſubject of your attention. I have, however, no other direction to give you, than that which may ſtand for an abridgement of this diſcourſe, of all my other preaching, and of my whole miniſtry; Love God; be the Lord's by *inclination*, as you are his by *condition*, and by *engagement*. Then, the miſeries of this life will be tolerable, and the approach of death delightful. God grant his bleſſing on the word! To him be honour and glory for ever. Amen.

SERMON IV.

THE EQUALITY OF MANKIND.

PROVERBS xxii. 2.

The rich and poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all.

AMONG the various diſpenſations of providence, which regard mankind, one of the moſt advantageous in the original deſign of the Creator, and at the ſame time one of the moſt fatal through our abuſe of it, is the diverſity of our conditions. How could men have formed one ſocial body, if all conditions had been equal? Had all poſſeſſed the ſame rank, the ſame opulence, the ſame power, how could they have relieved one another from the inconveniences, which would have continually attended each of them: Variety of conditions renders men neceſſary to each other. The governor is neceſſary to the people, the people are neceſſary to the governor; wiſe ſtateſmen are neceſſary to a powerful ſoldiery, a powerful ſoldiery is neceſſary to wiſe ſtateſmen. A ſenſe of this neceſſity is the ſtrongeſt bond of union, and this it is, which inclines one to aſſiſt another in hopes of receiving aſſiſtance in his turn.

But if this diverſity be connected with the higheſt utility to mankind in the original deſign of the Creator, it is become, we muſt allow, productive of fatal evils through our abuſe of it. On the one hand, they, whoſe condition is the moſt brilliant, are dazzled with their own brightneſs; they ſtudy the articles, which elevate them above their fellow creatures, and they chooſe to be ignorant of every thing, that puts themſelves on a level with them; they perſuade themſelves, that

that they are beings incomparable, far more noble and excellent than thoſe vile mortals, on whom they proudly tread, and on whom they ſcarcely deign to caſt a haughty eye. Hence provoking arrogance, cruel reſerve, and hence tyranny and deſpotiſm. On the other hand, they, who are placed in inferior ſtations, proſtrate their imaginations before theſe beings, whom they treat rather as gods than men; them they conſtitute arbiters of right and wrong, true and falſe; they forget, while they reſpect the rank which the Supreme Governor of the world hath given to their ſuperiors, to maintain a ſenſe of their own dignity. Hence come ſoft compliances, baſe ſubmiſſions of reaſon and conſcience, ſlavery the moſt willing and abject, to the high demands of theſe phantoms of grandeur, theſe imaginary gods.

To rectify theſe different ideas, to humble the one claſs, and to exalt the other, it is neceſſary to ſhew men in their true point of view; to convince them that diverſity of condition, which God hath been pleaſed to eſtabliſh among them, is perfectly conſiſtent with equality; that the ſplendid condition of the firſt, includes nothing that favours their ideas of ſelf-preference; and that there is nothing in the low condition of the laſt, which deprives them of their real dignity, or debaſes their intelligences formed in the image of God. I deſign to diſcuſs this ſubject to-day. The men, who compoſe this audience, and among whom providence hath very unequally divided the bleſſings of this life; princes, who command, and to whom God himſelf hath given authority to command ſubjects; ſubjects, who obey, and on whom God hath impoſed obedience as a duty; the rich, who give alms, and the poor who receive them; all, all my hearers, I am going to reduce to their natural equality, and to conſider this equality as a ſource of piety. This is the

meaning

meaning of the wise man in the words of the text, "The rich and the poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all."

Let us enter into the matter. We suppose two truths, and do not attempt to prove them. First, that, although the wise man mentions here only two different states, yet he includes all. Under the general notion of *rich* and *poor*, we think, he comprehends every thing, that makes any sensible difference in the conditions of mankind. Accordingly, it is an inconteſtible truth, that what he says of the *rich and poor* may be said of the nobleman and plebeian, of the master and the servant. It may be said, the master and the servant, the nobleman and the plebeian, *meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all*: and so of the rest.

It is not unlikely, however, that Solomon, when he spoke of *the rich and poor*, had a particular design in choosing this kind of diversity of condition to illustrate his meaning in preference to every other. Although I can hardly conceive, that there ever was a period of time, in which the love of riches did fascinate the eyes of mankind, as it does in this age; yet it is very credible, that in Solomon's time, as in ours, riches made the grand difference among men. Strictly speaking, there are now only two conditions of mankind, that of the rich and that of the poor. Riches decide all, yea those qualities, which seem to have no concern with them, I mean, mental qualifications. Find but the art of amassing money, and you will thereby find that of uniting in your own person all the advantages of which mankind have entertained the highest ideas. How mean soever your birth may have been, you will possess the art of concealing it, and you may form an alliance with the most illustrious families; how small soever your knowledge may be, you may pass for a superior genius,

capable of deciding queſtions the moſt intricate, points the moſt abſtruſe; and, what is ſtill more deplorable, you may purchaſe with ſilver and gold a kind of honour and virtue, while you remain the moſt abandoned of mankind, at leaſt, your money will attract that reſpect, which is due to nothing but honour and virtue.

The ſecond truth which we ſuppoſe, is, that this propoſition, *the Lord is the maker of them all*, is one of thoſe conciſe, I had almoſt ſaid one of thoſe defective propoſitions, which a judicious auditor ought to fill up, in order to give it a proper meaning. The ſtyle is very common in our ſcriptures; it is peculiarly proper in ſententious works, ſuch as this, out of which we have taken the text. The deſign of Solomon is to teach us, that whatever diverſities of conditions there may be in ſociety, the men, who compoſe it, are *eſſentially equal*. The reaſon that he aſſigns, is, *the Lord is the maker of them all*. If this idea be not added, the propoſition proves nothing at all. It does not follow, becauſe the ſame God is the *creator* of two beings, that there is any reſemblance between them, much leſs that they are equal. Is not God the creator of pure unembodied intelligences, who have faculties ſuperior to thoſe of mankind? Is not God the author of their exiſtence as well as of ours? Becauſe *God is the creator of both*, does it follow that both are equal? God is no leſs the creator of the organs of an ant, than he is the creator of the ſublime geniuſes of a part of mankind. Becauſe God hath created an ant and a ſublime genius, does it follow, that theſe two beings are equal? The meaning of the words of Solomon depends then on what a prudent reader ſupplies. We may judge what ought to be ſupplied by the nature of the ſubject, and by a parallel paſſage in the book of Job. "Did not he, that made me in the womb, make my ſervant? and did he

not

not fashion us alike*?" chap. xxxi. 15. To the words of our text, therefore, *the Lord is the maker of them all*, we must add, *the Lord hath fashioned them all alike*. Nothing but gross ignorance, or wild treachery, can incline an expositor to abuse this liberty of making up the sense of a passage, and induce him to conclude, that he may add to a text whatever may seem to him the most proper to support a favourite opinion, or to cover an unworthy passion. When we are inquisitive for truth, it is easy to discover the passages of holy scripture, in which the authors have made use of these concise imperfect sentences.

Of this kind are all passages, which excite no distinct ideas, or which exite ideas foreign from the scope of the writer, unless the meaning be supplied. For example, we read these words in the eleventh chapter of St. Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians, ver. 4. "If he, that cometh, preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him." If we attach such ideas to these words, as they seem at first to excite, we shall take them in a sense quite opposite to the meaning of St. Paul. The apostle aimed to make the Corinthians respect his ministry, and to consider his apostleship as confirmed of God in a manner as clear and decisive as that of any minister, who had preached to them. Is the proposition, that we have read, any thing to this purpose, unless we supply what is not expressed? But if we supply

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* This reading of the French bible differs a little from our translation; but a comparison of the two translations with the original, and with the scope of the place, will give the preference to the French reading. *Nonne disposuit nos in utero unus atque idem?* Vid. Poli Synops. in loc.

what is understood, and add these words, *but this is incredible*, or any other's equivalent, we shall perceive the force of his reasoning, which is this: If there hath been among you any one, whose preaching have revealed a Redeemer, better adapted to your wants than he, whom we have preached to you, or if you have received more excellent gifts than those, which the holy Spirit so abundantly diffused among you by our ministry, you might indeed have preferred him before us; but it is not credible, that you have had such teachers: you ought then to respect our ministry.

We need not make any more remarks of this kind; our text, it is easy to see, ought to be classed with them, that are imperfect, and must be supplied with words to make up the sense. *The rich and the poor meet together* in four articles of equality; because *the Lord hath made them all* EQUAL in *nature* or in *essence*, equal in *privileges*, equal in *appointment*, equal in their *last end*. The Lord hath made them equal in *nature*; they have the same faculties, and the same infirmities: Equal in *privileges*; for both are capable by the excellence of their nature, and more still by that of their religion, to form the noblest designs: Equal in *designation*; for although the rich differ from the poor in their condition, yet both are intended to answer the great purposes of God with regard to human nature: Finally, they are equal in their *last end*; the same sentence of death is passed on both, and both alike must submit to it. "The rich and the poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all." Thus the text affords us four truths worthy of our most serious attention.

The first article of equality, in which men *meet together*, is an equality of *essence* or of *nature*; the Lord hath made them all with the same faculties, and with the same infirmities.

1. With

1. With the same *faculties*. What is man? He consists of a body, and of a soul united to a body. This definition, or rather, if you will, this description, agrees to all mankind, to the great as well as to the small, to the rich as well as to the poor. The soul of the poor hath the same power as that of the rich, and to lay down principles, to infer consequences, to distinguish truth from falsehood, to choose good or evil, or examine what is most advantageous and most glorious to it. The body of the poor, as well as that of the rich, displays the wisdom of him, who formed it; it hath a symmetry in its parts, an exactness in its motions, and a proportion to its secret springs. The laws, that unite the body of the poor to his soul, are the same as those, which unite these two beings in the rich; there is the same connexion between the two parts, that constitute the essence of the man; a similar motion of the body produceth a similar thought in the mind; a similar idea of the mind, or a similar emotion of the heart, produceth a similar motion of the body. This is man. These are the faculties of men. Diversity of condition makes no alteration in these faculties.

2. *The Lord hath made them all* with the same *infirmities*. They have the same infirmities of body. The body of the rich, as well as that of the poor, is a common receptacle, where a thousand impurities meet; it is a general rendezvous of pains and sicknesses; it is *a house of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, and is crushed before the moth*, Job iv. 19.

They have the same mental infirmities. The mind of the rich, like that of the poor, is incapable of satisfying itself on a thousand desirable questions. The mind of the rich, as well as that of the poor, is prevented by its natural ignorance, when it would expand itself in contemplation, and eclaircise a number of obvious phœnomena.

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The soul of the rich, like that of the poor, is subject to doubt, uncertainty, and ignorance; and, what is more mortifying still, the heart of the rich, like the poor man's heart, is subject to the same passions, to envy, and to anger, and to all the disorder of sin.

They have the same frailties in the laws, that unite the soul to the body. The soul of the rich, like the soul of the poor, is united to a body, or rather enslaved by it. The soul of the rich, like that of the poor, is interrupted in its most profound meditations by a single ray of light, by the buzzing of a fly, or by the touch of an atom of dust. The rich man's faculties of reasoning and of self-determining are suspended, and in some sort vanished and absorbed, like those of the poor, on the slightest alteration of the senses; and this alteration of the senses happens to him, as well as to the poor, at the approach of certain objects. David's reason is suspended at the sight of Bathsheba; David no longer distinguisheth good from evil; David forgets the purity of the laws, which he himself had so highly celebrated; and, at the sight of this object, his whole system of piety is refuted, his whole edifice of religion sinks and disappears.

The second point of equality, in which *the rich and the poor meet together*, is an equality of *privileges*. To aspire at certain eminences, when providence hath placed us in inferior stations in society, is egregious folly. If a man, who hath only ordinary talents, only a common genius, pretend to acquire an immortal reputation among heroes, and to fill the world with his name and exploits, he acts fancifully and wildly. If he, who was born a subject, rashly and ambitiously attempt to ascend the tribunal of a magistrate, or the throne of a king, and to aim at governing, when he is called to obey, he is guilty of rebellion. But this law, which forbids inferiors to arrogate

rogate to themſelves ſome privileges, doth not prohibit them from aſpiring at others, incomparably more great and glorious.

Let us diſcover, if it be poſſible, the moſt miſerable man in this aſſembly; let us diſſipate the darkneſs that covers him; let us raiſe him from that kind of grave, in which his indigence and meanneſs conceal him. This man, unknown to the reſt of mankind; this man, who ſeems hardly formed by the Creator into an intelligent exiſtence; this man hath, however, the greateſt and moſt glorious privileges. This man, being reconciled to God by religion, hath a right to aſpire to the moſt noble and ſublime objects of it. He hath a right to elevate his ſoul to God in ardent prayer; and, without the hazard of being taxed with vanity, he may aſſure himſelf, that God, the Great God, encircled in glory, and ſurrounded with the praiſes of the bleſſed, will behold him, hear his prayer, and grant his requeſt. This man hath a right to ſay to himſelf, The attention, that the Lord of nature gives to the government of the univerſe, to the wants of mankind, to the innumerable company of angels, and to his own felicity, doth not prevent this adorable Being from attending to me; from occupying himſelf about my perſon, my children, my family, my houſe, my health, my ſubſtance, my ſalvation, my moſt minute concern, even a ſingle *hair of my head*, Luke xxi. 18. This man hath a right of addreſſing God by names the moſt tender and mild, yea, if I may venture to ſpeak ſo, by thoſe moſt familiar names, which equals give each other; he may call him his God, his maſter, his father, his friend. Believers have addreſſed God by each of theſe names, and God hath not only permitted them to do ſo, he hath even expreſſed his approbation of their taking theſe names in their mouths. This man hath a right of coming to eat with God at the Lord's table,

table, and to live, if I may be allowed to speak so, to live with God, as a man lives with his friend. This man hath a right to apply to himself whatever is most great, most comfortable, most extatic in the mysteries of redemption, and to say to himself, For me the divine Intelligence revolved the plan of redemption; for me the Son of God was appointed, before the foundation of the world, to be a propitiatory sacrifice; for me in the fulness of time he took mortal flesh; for me he lived several years among men in this world; for me he pledged himself to the justice of his Father, and suffered such unparalleled punishment, as confounds reason and surpasses imagination; for me the holy Spirit *shook the heavens and the earth, and the sea and the dry land*; Hag. ii. 6. and established a ministry, which he confirmed by healing the sick, by raising the dead, by casting out devils, and by subverting the whole order of nature. This man hath a right to aspire to the felicity of the immortal God, to the glory of the immortal God, to the throne of the immortal God. Arrived at the fatal hour, lying on his dying bed, reduced to the sight of useless friends, ineffectual remedies, unavailing tears, he hath a right to triumph over death, and to defy his disturbing in the smallest degree the tranquil calm, that his soul enjoys; he hath a right to summon the gates of heaven to admit his soul, and to say to them, *Lift up your heads; O ye gates! even lift them up, ye everlasting doors!*

These are the incontestible privileges of the man, who appears to us so contemptible. I ask, my brethren, have the nobles of the earth any privileges more than these? Do the train of attendants, which follows them, the horses, that draw them, the grandees, who surround them, the superb titles, which command exterior homage, give them any real superiority over the man,

who

who enjoys those privileges, which we have briefly enumerated? Ah! my brethren, nothing proves the littleness of great men more than the impression, which the exterior advantages, that distinguish them from the rest of mankind, make on their minds. Are you aware of what you are doing, when you despise them whom providence placeth for a few years in a situation inferior to your own? You are despising and degrading yourselves, you are renouncing your real greatness, and, by valuing yourselves for a kind of foreign glory, you discover a contempt for that, which constitutes the real dignity of your nature. The glory of man does not consist in his being a master, or a rich man, a nobleman, or a king; it consists in his being a man, in his being formed in the image of his Creator, and capable of all the elevation, that we have been describing. If you condemn your inferiors in society, you plainly declare, that you are insensible to your real dignity; for, had you derived your ideas of real greatness from their true source, you would have respected it in persons, who appear the most mean and despicable. *The rich and the poor meet together; the Lord hath* endowed *them all* with the same privileges. They all *meet together* on the same line of equality in regard to their claims of privileges. This was the point to be proved.

We add, in the third place, *the rich and the poor meet together* in an equality of *destination*. Rich and poor are placed by providence in different ranks, I grant; but their different stations are fixed with the same design, I mean, to accomplish the purposes of God in regard to men.

What are the designs of God in regard to men? What end doth he propose to effect by placing us on this planet, thirty, forty, or sixty years, before he declares our eternal state? We have frequently answered this important question. God hath placed us here in a state of probation:

he hath set before our eyes supreme felicity and intolerable misery; he hath pointed out the vices, that conduct to the last, and the virtues necessary to arrive at the first; and he hath declared, that our conduct shall determine our future fate. This, I think, is the design of God in regard to men. This is the notion, that we ought to form, of the end which God proposes in fixing us a few years upon earth, and in placing us among our fellow creatures in society.

On this principle, which is the most glorious condition? It is neither that, which elevates us highest in society, nor that, which procureth us the greatest conveniences of life. If it be not absolutely indifferent to men, to whom it is uncertain whether they shall quit the present world the next moment, or continue almost a century in it; I say, if it be not absolutely indifferent to them, whether they be high or low, rich or poor, it would be contrary to all the laws of prudence, were they to determine their choice of a condition by considerations of this kind alone. A creature capable of eternal felicity, ought to consider that the most glorious condition, which is the most likely to procure him the eternal felicity, of which he is capable. Were a wise man to choose a condition, he would certainly prefer that, in which he could do most good; he would always consider that as the most glorious station for himself, in which he could best answer the great end, for which his Creator placed him in this world. It is glorious to be at the head of a nation; but if I could do more good in a mean station, than I could do in an eminent post, the meanest station would be far more glorious to me than the most eminent post. Why? because that is most glorious to me, which best answers the end that my Creator proposed in placing me in this world. God placed me in this world to enable me to do good, and prepare myself by a holy

life

life for a happy eternity. To do good at the head of a nation, certain talents are neceſſary. If I have not theſe talents, not only I ſhould not do good in this poſt, but I ſhould certainly do evil. I ſhould expoſe my country to danger; I ſhould ſink its credit, obſcure its glory, and debaſe its dignity. It is, therefore, incomparably leſs glorious for me to be at the head of a ſtate, than to occupy a poſt leſs eminent. It is glorious to fill the higheſt office in the church, to announce the oracles of God, to develope the myſteries of the kingdom of heaven, and to direct wandering ſouls to the road that leads to the ſovereign good; but if I be deſtitute of gifts eſſential to the filling of this office, it is incomparably more glorious to me to remain a pupil than to commence a tutor. Why? becauſe that ſtation is the moſt eligible to me, which beſt empowers me to anſwer the end for which my Creator placed me in this world. My Creator placed me in this world, that I might do good, and that by a holy life I might prepare for a happy eternity. In order to do good in the higheſt offices in the church, great talents are neceſſary. If God hath not beſtowed great talents on me, I ſhould not only not do good, but I ſhould do harm. Inſtead of announcing the oracles of God, I ſhould preach the traditions of men; I ſhould involve the myſteries of religion in darkneſs, inſtead of developing them; I ſhould plunge poor mortals into an abyſs of miſery, inſtead of pointing out the road which would conduct them to a bleſſed immortality. But by remaining in the ſtate of a diſciple, I may obtain attention, docility, and a love to truth, which are the virtues of my condition. It is more glorious to be a good ſubject than a bad king; it is more glorious to be a good diſciple than a bad teacher.

But moſt men have falſe ideas of glory, and we form our notions of it from the opinions of theſe

unjuſt

unjuſt appraiſers of men and things. That, which elevates us in their eyes, ſeems glorious to us; and we eſteem that contemptible, which abaſeth us before them. We diſcover, I know not what, meanneſs in mechanical employments, and the contempt that we have for the employment extends itſelf to him who follows it, and thus we habituate ourſelves to deſpiſe them whom God honours. Let us undeceive ourſelves, my brethren; there is no condition ſhameful, except it neceſſarily lead us to ſome infraction of the laws of our Supreme *Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy*, James iv. 12. Strictly ſpeaking, one condition of life is no more honourable than another. There are, I grant, ſome ſtations, in which the objects, that employ thoſe who fill them, are naturally more noble than thoſe of other ſtations. The condition of a magiſtrate, whoſe employment is to improve and to enforce maxims of government, hath a nobler object than that of a mechanic, whoſe buſineſs it is to improve the leaſt neceſſary art. There is a nobler object in the ſtation of a paſtor called to publiſh the laws of religion, than in that of a ſchoolmaſter confined to teach the letters of the alphabet. But God will regulate our eternal ſtate not according to the object of our purſuit, but according to the manner in which we ſhould have purſued it. In this point of light, all ranks are equal, every condition is the ſame. Mankind have, then, an equality of *deſtination*. The rich and the poor are placed in different ranks with the ſame view, both are to anſwer the great end, that God hath propoſed to anſwer by creating and arranging mankind.

Hitherto we have had occaſion for ſome little labour to prove our theſis, that all men are equal, notwithſtanding the various conditions in which God hath placed them. And you, my brethren, have had occaſion for ſome docility to feel the

force

force of our arguments. But in our fourth article, the truth will eſtabliſh itſelf, and its force will be felt by a recital, yea by a hint of our arguments.

We ſaid, fourthly, that men are equal in their *laſt end*, that the ſame ſentence of death is denounced on all, and that they muſt all alike ſubmit to their fate. On which ſide can we view death, and not receive abundant evidence of this truth? Conſider the certainty of death, the nearneſs of death, the harbingers of death, the ravages of death, ſo many ſides by which death may be conſidered, ſo many proofs, ſo many demonſtrations, ſo many ſources of demonſtrations of the truth of this ſenſe of my text, *the rich and poor meet together, the Lord is the maker of them all.*

1. Remark the *certainty* of death. "Duſt thou art, and unto duſt ſhalt thou return," Gen. iii. 19. "It is appointed unto men once to die," Heb. ix. 27. The ſentence is univerſal, its univerſality involves all the poſterity of Adam; it includes all conditions, all profeſſions, all ſtations, and every ſtep of life enſures the execution of it.

Whither art thou going, rich man! thou, who congratulateſt thyſelf becauſe thy *fields bring forth plentifully*, and who ſayeſt to thy ſoul, *Soul! thou haſt much goods laid up for many years; take thine eaſe, eat, drink, and be merry?* To death. Whither art thou going, poor man! thou, who art toiling through a languiſhing life, who beggeſt thy bread from door to door, who art continually perplexed in finding out means of procuring bread to eat and raiment to put on, always an object of the charity of ſome, and of the hardheartedneſs of others? To death. Whither goeſt thou, nobleman! thou, who deckeſt thyſelf with borrowed plumes, who putteſt the renown of thine anceſtors into the liſt of thy virtues, and who thinkeſt thyſelf formed of

an earth more refined than that of the reſt of mankind? To death. Whither goeſt thou, peaſant! thou, who derideſt the folly of a peer, and at the ſame time valueſt thyſelf on ſomething equally abſurd? To death. Whither, ſoldier! art thou marching; thou, who talkeſt of nothing but glory and heroiſm, and who amidmany voices ſounding in thine ears, and inceſſantly crying, *Remember thou art mortal*, art dreaming of, I know not what, immortality? To death. Whither art thou going, merchant! thou, who breatheſt nothing but the increaſe of thy fortune, and who judgeſt of the happineſs or miſery of thy days, not by thine acquiſition of knowledge and thy practice of virtue, but by the gain or the loſs of thy wealth? To death. Whither are we all going, my dear hearers? To death. Do I exceed the truth, my brethren? Does death regard titles, dignities, and riches? Where is Alexander? Where is Cæſar? Where are all they, whoſe names ſtruck terror through the whole world? They were: but they are no more. They fell before the voice, that cried, *Return, ye children of men*, Pſal. xc. 3. "I ſaid, Ye are gods; but ye ſhall die like men," Pſal. lxxxii. 6. *I ſaid, Ye are gods;* this, ye great men of the earth! this is your title; this is the patent, that creates your dignity, that ſubjects us to your commands, and teacheth us to revere your characters: *but ye ſhall die like men;* this is the decree, that degrades you, and puts you on a level with us. *Ye are gods;* I will, then, reſpect your authority, and conſider you as images of him, *by whom kings reign: but ye ſhall die;* I will not, then, ſuffer myſelf to be impoſed on by your grandeur, and whatever homage I may yield to my king, I will always remember that he is a man. The certainty of death is the firſt ſide, on which we may conſider this murderer of

mankind,

mankind, and it is the first proof of our fourth propoſition: Mankind are equal in their *last end*.

2. The *proximity* of death is a ſecond demonſtration, a ſecond ſource of demonſtrations. The limits of our lives are equal. The life of the rich, as well as that of the poor, is *reduced to an hand-breadth*, Pſal. xxxix. 5. "Sixty, eighty, or a hundred years, is uſually the date of a long life. The ſceptre hath no more privilege in this reſpect than the crook; nor is the palace at any greater diſtance from the tomb, than the cottage from the grave. Heaps of ſilver and gold may intercept the rich man's ſight of death; but they can neither intercept death's ſight of the rich man, nor prevent his forcing the feeble intrenchments, in which he may attempt to hide himſelf.

3. The *harbingers* of death are a third demonſtration, a third ſource of demonſtrations. The rich have the ſame forerunners as the poor; both have ſimilar dying agonies, violent ſickneſſes, diſguſtful medicines, intolerable pains, and cruel miſgivings. Paſs through thoſe ſuperb apartments, in which the rich man ſeems to defy the enemy, who lurks and threatens to ſeize him; go through the croud of domeſtics, who ſurround him; caſt your eyes on the bed, where nature and art have contributed to his eaſe. In this grand edifice, amidſt this aſſembly of courtiers, or, ſhall I rather ſay? amidſt this troop of vile ſlaves, you will find a moſt mortifying and miſerable object. You will ſee a viſage all pale, livid, diſtorted; you will hear the ſhrieks of a wretch tormented with the gravel, or the gout; you will ſee a ſoul terrified with the fear of thoſe eternal books, which are about to be opened, of that formidable tribunal, which is already erected, of the awful ſentence, that is about to be denounced.

4. The *ravages* of death make a fourth demonſtration; they are the ſame with the rich as with

with the poor. Death alike condemns their eyes to impenetrable night, their tongue to eternal silence, their whole system to total destruction. I see a superb monument. I approach this striking object. I see magnificent inscriptions. I read the pompous titles of the *most noble*, the *most puissant*, *general*, *prince*, *monarch*, *arbiter of peace*, *arbiter of war*. I long to see the inside of this elegant piece of workmanship, and I peep under the stone, that covers him, to whom all this pomp is consecrated; there I find, what ------ a putrified carcase devouring by worms. O vanity of human grandeur! "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity! Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom is no help," Eccl. i. 2. "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish," Psal. cxlvi. 3. 4. "As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field so he flourisheth; for the wind passeth over it, and it is gone: and the place thereof shall know it no more," Psal. ciii. 15, 16.

5. Finally, *the judgment*, that follows death, carries our proposition to the highest degree of evidence. "It is appointed unto men once to die; but after this the judgment," Heb. ix. 27. The rich and the poor must alike appear before that throne, which St. John describes in the revelation, and before that venerable personage, *from whose face the heaven and the earth flee away*, chap. xx. 11. If there be any difference between the rich and the poor, it is all, methinks, in favour of the latter. The summons, that must be one day addressed to each of us, *give an account of thy stewardship*, Luke xvi. 2. this summons is always terrible. You indigent people! whom God (to use the language of scripture) hath *set over a few things*, an account of these *few things* will be required of you, and you will

be

be as surely punished for hiding *one talent*, as if you had hidden more, Matt. xxv. 17.

But how terrible to me seems the account, that must be given of a great number of talents! If the rich man have some advantages over the poor, (and who can doubt that he hath many?) how are his advantages counterpoised by the thought of the consequences of death! What a summons, my brethren! is this, for a great man, *Give an account of thy stewardship!* give an account of thy *riches*. Didst thou acquire them lawfully? or were they the produce of unjust dealings, of cruel extortions, of repeated frauds, of violated promises, of perjuries and oaths? Didst thou distribute them charitably, compassionately, liberally? or didst thou reserve them avariciously, meanly, barbarously? Didst thou employ them to found hospitals, to procure instruction for the ignorant, relief for the sick, consolations for the afflicted? or didst thou employ them to cherish thy pride, to display thy vanity, to immortalize thine ambition and arrogance? Give an account of thy *reputation*. Didst thou employ it to relieve the oppressed, to protect the widow and orphan, to maintain justice, to diffuse truth, to propagate religion? or, on the contrary, didst thou use it to degrade others, to deify thy passions, to render thyself a scourge to society, a plague to mankind? Give an account of thine *honours*. Didst thou direct them to their true end, by contributing all in thy power to the good of society, to the defence of thy country, to the prosperity of trade, to the advantage of the public? or didst thou direct them only to thine own private interest, to the establishing of thy fortune, to the elevation of thy family, to the insatiable avidity of glory, which gnawed and devoured thee? Ah! my brethren! if we enter very seriously into these reflections, we shall not be so much struck, as we usually are,

with

with the diverſity of men's conditions in this life; we ſhall not aſpire very eagerly after the higheſt ranks in this world. *The rich and poor meet together, the Lord is the maker of them all;* that is to ſay, he hath made them equal in their nature, equal in their privileges, equal in their deſtination, and equal, as we have proved, in their laſt end.

The inferences, that we intend to draw from what we have ſaid, are not inferences of ſedition and anarchy. We do not mean to diſturb the order of ſociety; nor, by affirming that all men have an eſſential equality, to rebrobate that ſubordination, without which ſociety would be nothing but confuſion, and the men, who compoſe it, a lawleſs banditti. We affirm, that the ſubject and the prince, the maſter and the ſervant, are truly and properly equal; but far be it from us to infer, that therefore the ſubject ſhould withdraw his ſubmiſſion from his prince, or the ſervant diminiſh his obedience to his maſter. On the contrary, ſubjects and ſervants would renounce all, that is glorious in their conditions, if they entertained ſuch wild ideas in their minds. That, which equals them to the ſuperiors, whom providence hath ſet over them, is the belief of their being capable, as well as their ſuperiors, of anſwering the end that God propoſeth in creating mankind. They would counteract this end, were they to refuſe to diſcharge thoſe duties of their condition, to which providence calls them.

Nor would we derive from the truths, which we have affirmed, fanatical inferences. We endeavoured before to preclude all occaſion for reproach on this article, yet perhaps we may not eſcape it; for how often does an unfriendly auditor, in order to enjoy the pleaſure of decrying a diſguſtful truth, affect to forget the corrective, with which the preacher ſweetens it? we repeat it, therefore, once more; we do not pretend to affirm,

affirm, that the conditions of all men are abſolutely equal, by affirming that in ſome ſenſes all mankind are on a level. We do not ſay, that the man, whom ſociety agrees to contemn, is as happy as the man, whom ſociety unites to revere. We do not ſay, that the man, who hath no where to hide his head, is as happy as he, who is commodiouſly accommodated. We do not ſay, that a man, who is deſtitute of all the neceſſaries of life, is as happy as the man, whoſe fortune is ſufficient to procure him all the conveniences of it. No, my brethren! we have no more deſign to deduce inferences of fanaticiſm from the doctrine of the text, than we have to infer maxims of anarchy and rebellion. But we infer juſt concluſions, conformable to the precious gift of reaſon, that the Creator hath beſtowed on us, and to the incomparably more precious gift of religion, with which he hath enriched us. Derive then, my brethren, concluſions of theſe kinds, and let them be the application of this diſcourſe.

Derive from our ſubject concluſions of *moderation*. Labour, for it is allowable, and the morality of the goſpel doth not condemn it, labour to render your name illuſtrious, to augment your fortune, to eſtabliſh your reputation, to contribute to the pleaſure of your life; but labour no more than becomes you. Let efforts of this kind never make you loſe ſight of the great end of life. Remember, as riches, grandeur, and reputation, are not the ſupreme good, ſo obſcurity, meanneſs, and indigence, are not the ſupreme evil. Let the care of avoiding the ſupreme evil, and the deſire of obtaining the ſupreme good, be always the moſt ardent of our wiſhes, and let others yield to that of arriving at the chief good.

Derive from our doctrine concluſions of *acquieſcence* in the laws of providence. If it pleaſe providence to put an eſſential difference between you and the great men of the earth, let it be

your

your holy ambition to excel in it. You cannot murmur without being guilty of reproaching God, because he hath made you what you are; because he formed you men, and not angels, archangels, or seraphims. Had he annexed essential privileges to the highest ranks, submission would always be your lot, and you ought always to adore, and to submit to that intelligence, which governs the world; but this is not your case. God gives to the great men of the earth an exterior, transient, superficial glory; but he hath made you share with them a glory real, solid, and permanent. What difficulty can a wise man find by acquiescing in this law of providence?

Derive from the truths you have heard conclusions of *vigilance*. Instead of ingeniously flattering yourself with the vain glory of being elevated above your neighbour, or of suffering your mind to sink under the puerile mortification of being inferior to him, incessantly inquire what is the virtue of your station, the duty of your rank, and use your utmost industry to fill it worthily. You are a magistrate: the virtue of your station, the duty of your rank, is to employ yourself wholly to serve your fellow subjects in inferior stations, to prefer the public good before your own private interest, to sacrifice yourself for the advantage of that state, the reins of which you hold. Practise this virtue, fulfil these engagements, put off self-interest, and devote yourself wholly to a people, who entrust you with their properties, their liberties, and their lives. You are a subject: the duty of your rank, the virtue of your station, is submission, and you should obey not only through fear of punishment, but through a wise regard for order. Practise this virtue, fulfil this engagement, make it your glory to submit, and in the authority of princes respect the power of God, whose ministers and representatives they are. You are a rich man: the virtue of your station,

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the duty of your condition, is beneficence, generosity, magnanimity. Practise these virtues, discharge these duties. Let your heart be always moved with the necessities of the wretched, and your ears open to their complaints. Never omit an opportunity of doing good, and be in society a general resource, and universal refuge.

From the truths, which you have heard, derive motives of *zeal and fervour*. It is mortifying, I own, in some respects, when one feels certain emotions of dignity and elevation, to sink in society. It is mortifying to beg bread of one, who is a man like ourselves. It is mortifying to be trodden under foot by our equals; and, to say all in a word, to be in stations very unequal among our equals. But this economy will quickly vanish. *The fashion of this world* will presently *pass away*, and we shall soon enter that blessed state, in which all distinctions will be abolished, and in which all that is noble in immortal souls, will shine in all its splendor. Let us, my brethren, sigh after this period, let us make it the object of our most constant and ardent prayers. God grant, we may all have a right to pray for it! God grant, our text may be one day verified in a new sense. May all, who compose this assembly, masters and servants, rich and poor, may we all, my dear hearers, having acknowledged ourselves equal in essence, in privileges, in destination, in last end, may we all alike participate the same glory. God grant it, for his mercy's sake.—Amen.

SERMON V.

THE WORTH OF THE SOUL.

MATTHEW xvi. 26.

What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

MY brethren, before we enforce the truths, which Jesus Christ included in the words of the text, we will endeavour to fix the meaning of it. This depends on the term *soul*, which is used in this passage, and which is one of the most equivocal words in scripture; for it is taken in different, and even in contrary senses, so that sometimes it signifies a *dead body*, Lev. xxi. 1. We will not divert your attention now, by reciting the long list of explications, that may be given to the term; but we will content ourselves with remarking, that it can be taken only in two senses in the text.

Soul may be taken for *life*; and in this sense the term is used by St. Matthew, who says, *They are dead, who sought the young child's soul*, chap. ii. 20. *Soul* may be taken for that spiritual part of us, which we call *the soul* by excellence; and in this sense it is used by our Lord, who says, *Fear not them, which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell*, chap. x. 28.

If we take the words in the first sense, for *life*, we put into the mouth of Jesus Christ a proposition verified by experience; that is, that men consider life as the greatest of all temporal blessings, and that they part with every thing to preserve it. This rule hath its exceptions; but the exceptions confirm the rule. Sometimes, indeed, a disgust with the world, a principle of religion,

a point of honour, will incline men to sacrifice their lives; but these particular cases cannot prevent our saying in the general, *What shall a man give in exchange for his life?*

If we take the word for that part of man, which we call the *soul* by excellence, Jesus Christ intended to point out to us, not what men usually do, (for alas! it happens too often, that men sacrifice their souls to the meanest and most sordid interest) but what they always ought to do. He meant to teach us, that the soul is the noblest part of us, and that nothing is too great to be given for its ransom.

Both these interpretations are probable, and each hath its partizans and its proofs. But, although we would not condemn the first, we prefer the last, not only because it is the most noble meaning, and opens the most extensive field of meditation; but because it seems to us the most conformable to our Saviour's design in speaking the words.

Judge by what precedes our text. "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Jesus Christ spoke thus to fortify his disciples against the temptations, to which their profession of the gospel was about to expose them. If by the word soul we understand the *life*, we shall be obliged to go a great way about to give any reasonable sense to the words. On the contrary, if we take the word for the *spirit*, the meaning of the whole is clear and easy. Now it seems to me beyond a doubt, that Jesus Christ, by the manner in which he hath connected the text with the preceding verse, used the term *soul* in the latter sense.

Judge of our comment also by what follows. "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" *For*, adds our Lord immediately after, *the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward*

every

every man according to his works. What connexion have these words with our text, if we take the word *soul* for *life?* What connexion is there between this proposition, *Man hath nothing more valuable than life*, and this, *For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels?* Whereas, if we adopt our sense of the term, the connexion instantly appears.

We will, then, retain this explication. By the *soul* we understand here the *spirit* of man; and, this word being thus explained, the meaning of Jesus Christ in the whole passage is understood in part, and one remark will be sufficient to explain it wholly. We must attend to the true meaning of the phrase, *lose his soul*, which immediately precedes the text, and which we shall often use to explain the text itself. To *lose the soul*, does not signify to be deprived of this part of one's self; for, however great this punishment might be, it is the chief object of a wicked man's wishes: but to *lose the soul*, is to lose those real blessings, and to sustain those real evils, which a soul is capable of enjoying and of suffering. When, therefore, Jesus Christ says in the words, that precede the text, *What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* and in the text, *What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* he exhibits one truth under different faces, so that our reflections will naturally be turned sometimes to the one, and sometimes to the other of these propositions. He points out, I say, two truths, which being united, signify, that as the conquest of the universe would not be an object of value sufficient to engage us to sacrifice our souls, so, if we had lost them, no price could be too great to be paid for the recovery of them. Let us here fix our attention; and let us examine what constitutes the dignity of the soul. Let us inquire,

I. The excellence of its nature;

II. The infinity of its duration;

III. The price of its redemption: Three articles which will divide this discourse.

I. Nothing can be given in exchange for our souls. We prove this proposition by the excellence of its *nature*. What is the soul? There have been great absurdities, in the answers given to this question. In former ages of darkness, when most of the studies, that were pursued for the cultivation of the mind, served to render it unfruitful; when, people thought, they had arrived at the highest degree of knowledge, if they had filled their memories with pompous terms and superb nonsense; in those times, I say, it was thought, the question might be fully and satisfactorily answered, and clear and complete ideas given of the nature of the soul. But in later times, when, philosophy being cleansed from the impurities that infected the schools, equivocal terms were rejected, and only clear and distinct ideas admitted, and thus literary investigations reduced to real and solid use; in these days, I say, philosophers, and philosophers of great name, have been afraid to answer this question, and have affirmed that the narrow limits, which confine our researches, disable us from acquiring any other than obscure notions of the human soul, and that all, which we can propose to elucidate the nature of it, serve rather to discover what it is not, than what it is. But if the decisions of the former favour of the presumption, does not the timid reservedness of the latter seem a blameable modesty? If we be incapable of giving such sufficient answers to the question as would fully satisfy a genius earnest in inquiring, and eager for demonstration, may we not be able to give clear and high ideas of our souls, and so to verify these sententious words of the Saviour of the world, *What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* Indeed,

Indeed, we do clearly and distinctly know three properties of the soul; and every one of us knows by his own experience, that it is capable of knowing, willing, and feeling. The first of these properties is intelligence, the second volition, the third sensation, or, more properly, the acutest sensibility. I am coming now to the design of my text, and here I hope to prove, at least to the intelligent part of my hearers, by the nature of the soul, that the loss of it is the greatest of all losses, and that nothing is too valuable to be given for its recovery.

Intelligence is the first property of the soul, and the first idea, that we ought to form of it, know its nature. The perfection of this property consists in having clear and distinct ideas, extensive and certain knowledge. *To lose the soul*, in this respect, is to sink into total ignorance. This loss is irreparable, and he, who should have lost his soul in this sense, could give nothing too great for its recovery. Knowledge and happiness are inseparable in intelligent beings, and, it is clear, a soul deprived of intelligence cannot enjoy perfect felicity. Few men, I know, can be persuaded to admit this truth; and there are, I must allow, great restrictions to be made on this article, while we are in the present state.

1. In our present state, *every degree of knowledge, that the mind acquires, costs the body much.* A man, who would make a progress in science, must retire, meditate, and, in some sense, involve himself in himself. Now meditation exhausts the animal spirits, close attention tires the brain; the collection of the soul into itself often injures the health, and sometimes puts a period to life.

2. In our present state, *our knowledge is confined within narrow bounds.* Questions the most worthy of our curiosity, and the most proper to animate and inflame us, are unanswerable; for the objects lie beyond our reach. From all our efforts

efforts to eclaircife fuch queftions, we fometimes derive only mortifying reflections on the weakneſs of our capacities, and the narrow limits of our knowledge.

3. In this preſent ſtate, *ſciences are incapable of demonſtration*, and conſiſt, in regard to us, of little more than probabilities and appearances. A man, whoſe genius is a little exact, is obliged in multitudes of caſes to doubt, and to ſuſpend his judgment; and his pleaſure of inveſtigating a point is almoſt always interrupted by the too well-grounded fear of taking a ſhadow for a ſubſtance, a phantom for a reality.

4. In this world, *moſt* of thoſe *ſciences*, in the ſtudy of which we ſpend the beſt part of life, *are improperly called ſciences*; they have indeed ſome diſtant relation to our wants in this preſent ſtate, but they have no reference at all to our real dignity. What relation to the real dignity of man hath the knowledge of languages, the arranging of various arbitrary and barbarous terms in the mind, to enable one to expreſs one thing in a hundred different words? What relation to the real dignity of man hath the ſtudy of antiquity? Is it worth while to hold a thouſand conferences, and to toil through a thouſand volumes, for the ſake of diſcovering the reveries of our anceſtors?

5. In this world, we often ſee *real* and uſeful *knowledge deprived of its luſtre*, through the ſupercilious neglect of mankind, and ſcience falſely ſo called crowned with their applauſe. One man, whoſe mind is a kind of ſcientific chaos, full of vain ſpeculations and confuſed ideas, ſhall be preferred before another, whoſe ſpeculations have always been directed to form his judgment, to purify his ideas, and to bow his heart to truth and virtue. This partiality is often ſeen. Now, although it argues a narrowneſs of ſoul to make happineſs depend on the opinion of others, yet it

is natural for intelligent beings, placed among other intelligent beings, to wish for that approbation which is due to real merit. Were the present life of any long duration, were not the proximity of all-pursuing death a powerful consolation against all our inconveniences, these unjust estimations would be very mortifying.

Such being the imperfections, the defects, and the obstacles of our knowledge, we ought not to be surprised, if in general we do not comprehend the great influence, that the perfection of our faculty of thinking and knowing hath over our happiness. And yet even in this life, and with all these disadvantages, our knowledge, however difficult to acquire, however confined, uncertain, and partial, how little soever it may be applauded, contributes to our felicity. Even in this life, there is an extreme difference between a learned and an illiterate man; between him, whose knowledge of languages enables him (so to speak) to converse with people of all nations, and of all ages, and him, who can only converse with his own contemporary countrymen; between him, whose knowledge of history enables him to distinguish the successful from the hazardous, and to profit by the vices and the virtues of his predecessors, and him, who falls every day into mistakes inseparable from the want of experience; between him, whose own understanding weighs all in the balance of truth, and him, who every moment needs a guide to conduct him. Even in this life, a man collected within himself, sequestered from the rest of mankind, separated from an intercourse with all the living, deprived of all that constitutes the bliss of society, entombed, if the expression may be allowed, in a solitary closet, or in a dusty library, such a man enjoys an innocent pleasure, more satisfactory and refined than that, which places of diversion the most frequented, and sights the most superb, can afford.

But

But if, even in this life, learning and knowledge have so much influence over our happiness, what shall we enjoy, when our souls shall be freed from their slavery to the senses? What, when we are permitted to indulge to the utmost the pleasing desire of knowing? What felicity, when God shall unfold to our contemplation that boundless extent of truth and knowledge, which his intelligence revolves! What happiness will accompany our certain knowledge of the nature, the perfections, and the purposes of God! What pleasure will attend our discovery of the profound wisdom, the perfect equity, and the exact fitness of those events, which often surprised and offended us! Above all, what sublime delight must we enjoy, when we find our own interest connected with every truth, and all serve to demonstrate the reality, the duration, the inadmissibility of our happiness! How think you, my brethren; is not such a property beyond all valuation? Can the world indemnify us for the final loss of it? If we have had the unhappiness to lose it, ought any thing to be accounted too great to be given for its recovery? And is not this expression of Jesus Christ, in this view of it, full of meaning and truth, *What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

What we have affirmed of the first property of our souls, that it is infinitely capable of contributing to our happiness, although we can never fully comprehend it on earth, we affirm of the other two properties, volition and sensibility.

The perfection of the will consists in a perfect harmony between the holiness and the plenitude of our desires. Now, to what degree soever we carry our holiness on earth, it is always mixed with imperfection. And, as our holiness is imperfect, our enjoyments must be so too. Moreover, as providence itself seems often to gratify an irregular will, we cannot well comprehend

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the misery of losing the soul in this respect. But judge of this loss, (and let one reflection suffice on this article) judge of this loss by this consideration. In that economy, into which our souls must enter, the Being, the most essentially holy, I mean God, is the most perfectly happy; and the most obstinately wicked being is the most completely miserable.

In like manner, we cannot well comprehend to what degree the property of our souls, that renders us susceptible of sensations, can be carried. How miserable soever the state of a man, exposed to heavy afflictions on earth, may be, a thousand causes lessen the weight of them. Sometimes reason assists the sufferer, and sometimes religion, sometimes a friend condoles, and sometimes a remedy relieves; and this thought at all times remains, death will shortly terminate all my ills. The same reflections may be made on sensations of pleasure, which are always mixed, suspended, and interrupted.

Nevertheless, the experience we have of our sensibility on earth, is sufficient to give us some just notions of the greatness of that loss, which a soul may sustain in this respect; nor is there any need to arouze our imaginations by images of an economy, of which we have no idea.

The most depraved of mankind, they, who are slaves to their senses, may comprehend the great misery of a state, in which the senses will be tormented, even better than a believer can, who usually studies to diminish the authority of sense, and to free his soul from its lawless sway.

Judge ye, then, of the loss of the soul, ye sensual minds, by this single consideration, if you have been insensible to all the rest. When we endeavoured to convince you of the greatness of this loss, by urging the privation of that knowledge, which the elect enjoy now, and which they hope to enjoy hereafter, you were not affected with

with this misery, because you considered the pleasure of knowing as a chimera. When we attempted to convince you of the misery of losing the soul, by urging the privation of virtue, and the stinging remorse that follows sin, you were not touched with this misery, because virtue you consider as a restraint, and remorse as a folly. But as you know no other felicity, nor any other misery, than what your senses transmit to your souls, judge of the loss of the soul by conceiving a state, in which all the senses shall be punished. The loss of the soul, is the loss of those harmonious sounds, which have so often charmed your ears; it is the loss of those exquisite flavours, that your palate has so often relished; it is the loss of all those objects of desire, which have excited your passions. The loss of the soul is an ocean of pain, the bare idea of which hath so often made you tremble, when religion called you to fall on it. The loss of the soul will be in regard to you the imprisonment of yon confessor, inclosed in a dark and filthy dungeon, a prey to infection and putrefaction, deprived of the air and the light. The loss of the soul will reduce you to the condition of that galley slave, groaning under the lashes of a barbarous officer, who is loaded with a galling chain, who sinks under the labour of that oar which he works, or rather, with which he himself is trailing along. The loss of the soul will place you in the condition of yon martyr on the wheel, whose living limbs are disjointed and racked, whose lingering life is loth to cease, who lives to glut the rage of his tormentors, and who expires only through an overflowing access of pain, his executioners with the barbarous industry being frugal of his blood and his strength, in order to make him suffer as much as he can possibly suffer before he dies.

But, as I said before, all these images convey but very imperfect ideas of the loss of our souls.

Were

Were we to extend our ſpeculations as far as the ſubject would allow, it would be eaſy to prove, that the ſoul is capable of enjoying ſenſible pleaſures infinitely more refined, and of ſuffering pains infinitely more excruciating, than all thoſe which are felt in this world. In this world, ſenſations of pleaſure and pain are proportioned to the end, that the Creator propoſed in rendering us capable of them. This end is almoſt always the preſervation and well-being of the body during the ſhort period of mortal life. To anſwer this end, it is not neceſſary, that pleaſure and pain ſhould be ſo exquiſite as our ſenſes may be capable of enduring. If our ſenſes give us notice of the approach of things hurtful and beneficial to us, it is ſufficient.

But in heaven ſenſible pleaſures will be infinitely more exquiſite. There the love of God will have its free courſe. There the promiſes of religion will all be fulfilled. There the labours of the righteous will be rewarded. There we ſhall diſcover how far the power of God will be diſplayed in favour of an elect ſoul. In like manner, the extent of divine power in puniſhing the wicked will appear in their future ſtate of miſery. That juſtice muſt be glorified, which nothing but the blood of Jeſus Chriſt could appeaſe in favour of the elect. There the ſinner muſt fall a victim to the wrath of God. There he muſt experience how *fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God*, Heb. x. 31. Hath a man, who is threatened with theſe miſeries, any thing too valuable to give for his redemption from them? Is not the nature of our ſouls, which is known by theſe three properties, underſtanding, volition, and ſenſibility, expreſſive of its dignity? Does not this demonſtrate this propoſition of our Saviour, *What ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?*

II. The *immortality* of a soul constitutes its dignity, and its endless duration is a source of demonstrations in favour of the proposition in the text. This dignity is incontestible. The principle of the immortality of the soul, from which we reason, is undeniable. Two suppositions may seem, at first sight, to weaken the evidence of the immortality of the soul. First, the close union of the soul to the body seems unfavourable to the doctrine of its immortality, and to predict its dissolution with the body. But this supposition, methinks, vanisheth, when we consider what a disproportion there is between the properties of the soul and those of the body. This disproportion proves, that they are two distinct substances. The separation of two distinct substances, makes indeed some change in the manner of their existing; but it can make none really in their existence.

But, whatever advantages we may derive from this reasoning, I freely acknowledge, that this, of all philosophical arguments for the immortality of the soul, the least of any affects me. The great question, on this article, is not what we think of our souls, when we consider them in themselves, independently on God, whose omnipotence surrounds and governs them. Could an infidel demonstrate, against us, that the human soul is material, and that therefore it must perish with the body; could we, on the contrary, demonstrate, against him, that the soul is immaterial, and that therefore it is not subject to laws of matter, and must survive the destruction of the body; neither side, in my opinion, would gain any thing considerable. The principal question, that, which alone ought to determine our notions on this article, would remain unexamined; that is, whether God will employ his power over our souls to perpetuate or to destroy them. For, could an infidel prove, that God would employ

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his power to annihilate our souls, in vain should we have demonstrated that they were naturally immortal; for we should be obliged to own, that they are mortal in respect of the will of that God, whose omnipotence rules them. In like manner, if we could prove to an unbeliever, that God would employ his power to preserve them in eternal existence, in vain would he have demonstrated, that considered in themselves they are mortal; and he would be obliged in his turn to allow that human souls are immortal, in virtue of the supreme power of God. Now, my brethren, the supposition, that God will employ his power to annihilate our souls, will entirely disappear, if you attend to the well-known and familiar argument of the connexion between the immortality of the soul, and that desire of immortality which the Creator hath imparted to it. What can we reply to a man who reasons in this manner?

I find myself in a world, where all things declare the perfections of the Creator. The more I consider all the parts, the more I admire the fitness of each to answer the end of him who created them all. Among numberless productions, perfectly correspondent to their destination, I find only one being, whose condition doth not seem to agree with that marvellous order, which I have observed in all the rest. This being is my own soul. And what is this soul of mine? Is it fire? Is it air? Is it ethereal matter? Under whatever notions I consider it, I am at a loss to define it. However, notwithstanding this obscurity, I do perceive enough of its nature to convince me of a great disproportion between the present state of my soul, and that end for which its Creator seems to have formed it. This soul, I know, I feel, (and, of all arguments, there are none more convincing than those that are taken from sentiment) this soul is a being eagerly bent on the enjoyment of a happiness infinite in its

Eccles. 3. 11.

duration.

duration. Should any one offer me a ſtate of perfect happineſs. that would continue ten thouſand years, an aſſemblage of reputation and riches, grandeur and magnificence, perhaps, dazzled with its glare, I might cede my pretenſions in conſideration of this enjoyment. But, after all, I fully perceive, that this felicity, how long, and how perfect ſoever it might be, would be inadequate to my wiſhes. Ten thouſand years are too few to gratify my deſires; my deſires leap the bounds of all fixed periods of duration, and roll along a boundleſs eternity. What is not eternal is unequal to my wiſhes, eternity only can ſatisfy them.

Such is my ſoul. But where is it lodged? Its place is the ground of my aſtoniſhment. This ſoul, this ſubject of ſo many deſires, inhabits a world of vanity and nothingneſs. Whether I climb the higheſt eminences, or pry into the deepeſt indigence, I can diſcover no object capable of filling my capacious deſires. I aſcend the thrones of ſovereigns, I deſcend into the beggar's duſt; I walk the palaces of princes, I lodge in the peaſant's cabin; I retire into the cloſet to be wiſe, I avoid recollection, chooſe ignorance, and increaſe the crowd of idiots; I live in ſolitude, I ruſh into the ſocial multitude; but every where I find a mortifying void. In all theſe places there is nothing ſatisfactory. In each I am more unhappy, through the deſire of ſeeing new objects, than ſatisfied with the enjoyment of what I poſſeſs. At moſt, I experience nothing in all theſe pleaſures, which my concupiſcence multiplies, but a mean of rendering my condition tolerable, not a mean of making it perfectly happy.

How can I reconcile theſe things? How can I make the Creator agree with himſelf? There is one way of doing this, a ſingular, but a certain way; a way, that ſolves all difficulties, and

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covers infidelity with confusion; a way, that teacheth me what I am, whence I came, and for what my Creator hath designed me. Although God hath placed me in this world, yet he doth not design to limit my prospects to it; though he hath mixed me with mere animals, yet he doth not intend to confound me with them; though he hath lodged my soul in a frail perishable body, yet he doth not mean to involve it in the dissolution of this frame. Without supposing immortality, that, which constitutes the dignity of man, makes his misery. These desires of immortal duration, this faculty of thinking and reflecting, of expanding and perpetuating the mind; this superiority of soul, that seems to elevate mankind above beasts, actually place the beast above the man, and fill him with these bitter reflections full of mortification and pain. Ye crawling reptiles! ye beasts of the field! destitute of intelligence and reason! if my soul be not immortal, I envy your condition. Content with your own organs, pleased with ranging the fields and browsing the herbage, your desires need no restraint; for all your wishes are fully satisfied. While I, abounding on the one hand with insatiable desires, and on the other confined amidst vain and unsatisfactory objects, I am on this account unhappy!

We repeat these philosophical reasonings, my brethren, only for the sake of convincing you, that we are in possession of immense advantages over sceptics in this dispute. On the principles of an unbeliever, you see, were his notion of revelation well-grounded; were the sacred book, in which so many characters of truth shine, an human production; were a reasonable man obliged to admit no other propositions than those, which have been allowed at the tribunal of right reason; yea, we say more, were our souls material, we ought, on the suppositions before mentioned,

to admit the immortality of the soul as most conformable to our best notions of the will of our Creator.

But, when we are thus convinced of our immortality, need we any new arguments to demonstrate the proposition included in the text, *What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* Most subjects may be made to appear with greater or less degree of importance, according to the greater or smaller degree of importance, in which the preacher places it. Pompous expressions, bold figures, lively images, ornaments of eloquence, may often supply a want of dignity in the subject discussed, or a want of proper dispositions in auditors, who attend the discussion of it. But, in my opinion, every attempt to give importance to a motive taken from eternity, is more likely to enfeeble the doctrine than to invigorate it. Motives of this kind are self-sufficient. Descriptions the most simple, and the most natural, that can be made, are always, I think, the most pathetic, and the most terrifying; nor can I find an expression, on this article, more eloquent and more emphatical than this of St. Paul, *The things which are seen, are temporal; but the things which are not seen, are eternal*, 2 Cor. iv. 18. Were the possession of the whole world the price you ask, in *exchange for your souls*; were the whole world free from those characters of vanity, which open such a boundless field to our reflections; would there not always be this disproportion between a perishing world and a soul aspiring at felicity, that the world would end and the soul would never die?

Death puts an end to the most specious titles, to the most dazzling grandeur, and to the most delicious life; and the thought of this period of human glory reminds me of the memorable action of a prince, who, although he was a heathen, was wiser than many christians; I mean the great Saladin.

"The World passeth away"

Saladin. After he had subdued Egypt, passed the Euphrates, and conquered cities without number; after he had retaken Jerusalem, and performed exploits more than human, in those wars, which superstition had stirred up for the recovery of the holy land; he finished his life in the performance of an action, that ought to be transmitted to the most distant posterity. A moment before he uttered his last sigh, he called the herald, who had carried his banner before him in all his battles, he commanded him to fasten to the top of a lance, the shroud, in which the dying prince was soon to be buried. Go, said he, carry this lance, unfurl this banner, and, while you lift up this standard, proclaim, *This, this is all, that remains to Saladin the great, the conqueror and the king of the empire, of all his glory.** Christians! I perform to-day the office of this herald. I fasten to the top of a spear, sensual and intellectual pleasures, worldly riches, and human honours. All these I reduce to the piece of crape, in which you will shortly be buried. This standard of death I lift up in your sight, and I cry, This, this is all, that will remain to you, of the possessions for which you exchanged your souls. Are such possessions too great to be given in exchange for such a soul? Can the idea of their perishing nature prevail over the idea of the immortality of the soul? And do you not feel the truth of the text, *What shall a man*, a rational man, a man who is capable of comparing eternity with time, what shall such a man *give in exchange for his soul?*

Finally, we make a reflection of another kind, to convince you of the dignity of your souls, and to persuade you, that nothing can be too valuable to be given in exchange for them. This is taken from the astonishing works, that God hath performed

* Maimb. Hist. des Croisades, lib. vi. p. 572. de l'Edit. in 4.

performed in their favour. We will confine ourselves to one article, to the ineſtimable price, that God hath given for the redemption of them. Hear theſe words of the holy ſcriptures, *Ye are bought with a price. Ye were redeemed from your vain converſation, not with corruptible things, as ſilver and gold; but with the precious blood of Chriſt,* 1 Cor. vi. 20. 1 Pet. i. 18.

Some of you, perhaps, may ſay, as the limits of a ſermon will not allow us to ſpeak of more than one of the wondrous works of God in favour of immortal ſouls, we ought, at leaſt, to chooſe that, which is moſt likely to affect an audience, and not to dwell on a ſubject, which, having been ſo often repeated, will make only ſlight impreſſions on their minds. Perhaps, were we to inform you, that, in order to ſave your ſouls, God had ſubverted formerly all the laws of nature, or, to uſe the language of a prophet, that he had *ſhaken the heavens and the earth, the ſea and the dry land,* Hag. ii. 6. perhaps, were we to tell you, that, in order to ſave your ſouls, God deferred the end of the world, and put off the laſt viciſſitudes, that are to put a period to the duration of this univerſe; that, according to St. Peter, *the Lord is long-ſuffering to us-ward,* 2 Pet. iii. 9. perhaps, were we to affirm, that, in order to ſave our ſouls, he will come one day on the clouds of heaven, ſitting on a throne, ſurrounded with glorious angels, accompanied with myriads of ſhouting voices, to deliver them with the greater pomp, and to ſave them with more ſplendour: perhaps, by relating all theſe mighty works done for our ſouls, we might excite in you ideas of their dignity, more lively than that, which we have choſen, and to which we intend to confine our attention. But, ſurmount, if you can, your cuſtomary indolence, and form an adequate idea of the dignity of the ſacrifice of Jeſus Chriſt, in order the better to judge of the dignity

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of thoſe ſouls, of which his blood was the price.

Go, learn it in heaven. Behold the Deity. Approach his throne. Obſerve the *thousand thousands miniſtering unto him, ten thousand times ten thousand ſtanding before him,* Dan. vii. 10. See his eyes ſparkling with fire, and his majeſty and glory filling his ſanctuary, and, by the dignity of the victim ſacrificed, judge of the value of the ſacrifice.

Go, ſtudy it in all the economies, that preceded this ſacrifice. Obſerve the types, which prefigured it; the ſhadows, that traced it out; the ceremonies, which depicted it; and, by the pomp of the preparations, judge of the dignity of the ſubſtance prepared.

Go, learn it on mount Calvary. Behold the wrath, that fell on the head of Jeſus Chriſt. Behold his blood pouring out upon the earth, and him, your Saviour, drinking the bitter cup of divine diſpleaſure. See his hands and his feet nailed to the croſs, and his whole body one great wound; obſerve the unbridled populace foaming with rage around the croſs, and glutting their ſavage ſouls with his barbarous ſufferings; and, by the horror of the cauſes that contributed to his death, judge of the death itſelf.

Go to the infidel, and let him teach you the dignity of the ſacrifice of Chriſt. Remember, on this account he attacks chriſtianity, and he hath ſome ſhew of reaſon for doing ſo; for if this religion may be attacked on any ſide, with the leaſt hope of ſucceſs, it is on this. The truths of the chriſtian religion are inconteſtible; but if there be any one article of the goſpel, which requires an entire docility of mind, an abſolute ſubmiſſion of heart, a perfect deference to God, who ſpeaks, it is the article of the ſacrifice of the croſs. Weigh the objections, and by the greatneſs of the difficulties judge of the dignity of the myſtery. Recollect,

Recollect, christian! God thought fit to require the blood of his Son for the redemption of our souls. These souls must have been very precious in the sight of God, since he redeemed them at a price so immense. The misery into which they were liable to be plunged, must have been extremely terrible, since God thought proper to make such great efforts to save them from it. The felicity, of which they are capable, and to which the Lord intends to elevate them, must be infinitely valuable, since it cost him so much to bring them to it. For what in the universe is of equal value with the blood of the Son of God? Disappear, all ye other miracles, wrought in favour of our souls! ye astonishing prodigies, that confirmed the gospel! thou, delay of the consummation of all things! ye great and terrible signs of the second coming of the Son of God! Vanish before the miracle of the cross; for the cross shines you all into darkness and shade. This glorious light makes your glimmering vanish; and after my imagination is filled with the tremendous dignity of this sacrifice, I can see nothing great beside. But, if God, if this just appraiser of things, hath estimated our souls at such a rate, shall we set a low price on them? If he hath given so much for them, do we imagine we can give too much for them? If, for their redemption, he hath sacrificed the most valuable person in heaven, do we imagine there is any thing upon earth too great to give up for them?

Gal. 6. 14

No, no, my brethren! after what we have heard, we ought to believe, that there is no shadow of exaggeration in this exclamation of Jesus Christ, *What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?* I do not certainly know what our Saviour meant to say; whether he intended to speak of a man, who should *gain the whole world*, and instantly

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lose his soul; or of one, who should not *lose his soul* till long after he had obtained *the whole world*, and had reigned over it through the course of a long life. But I do know, that the words are true, even in the most extensive sense. Suppose a man, who should not only enjoy universal empire for one whole age, but for a period equal to the duration of the world itself; the proposition, that is implied in the words of Jesus Christ, is applicable to him. Such a soul as we have described, a soul so excellent in its nature, so extensive in its duration, so precious through its redemption; a soul capable of acquiring so much knowledge, of conceiving so many desires, of experiencing so much remorse, of feeling so many pleasures and pains; a soul, that must subsist beyond all time, and perpetuate itself to eternity; a soul redeemed by the blood of the Son of God; a soul so valuable ought to be preferred before all things, and nothing is too precious to be given for its exchange. "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

However, my brethren, we are willing to acknowledge, were we in the case supposed by Jesus Christ; were it in our power to gain the whole world by losing our own souls; or, being actually universal monarchs, were we obliged to sacrifice this vast empire to recover our souls already lost; were we, being smitten with the splendid offer, or being alarmed at the immense price of our purchase, to prefer the whole world before our own souls; we might then, if not exculpate our conduct, yet at least give a little colour to it; if we could not gain our cause, we might however plead it with some shew of reason. A reason of state, a political motive, as that of governing a whole universe, would naturally have some influence over us. The titles of

Sovereign,

Sovereign, Monarch, Emperor, would naturally charm little ſouls, like ours. Sumptuous palaces, ſuperb equipages, a crowd of devoted courtiers, bowing and cringing before us, and all that exterior grandeur which environs the princes of the earth, would naturally faſcinate ſuch feeble eyes, and infatuate ſuch puerile imaginations as ours. I repeat it again, could we obtain the government of the univerſe by the ſale of our ſouls, if we could not juſtify our conduct, we might extenuate the guilt of it; and although we could not gain our cauſe, we might at leaſt plead it with ſome ſhew of reaſon.

But is this our caſe? Is it in our power to *gain the whole world?* Is this the price, at which we ſell our ſouls? O ſhame of human nature! O meanneſs of ſoul, more proper to confound us, than any thing elſe, with which we can be reproached! This intelligent ſoul, this immortal ſoul, this ſoul which has been thought worthy of redemption by the blood of the Saviour of the world, this ſoul we often part with for nothing, and for leſs than nothing! In our condition, placed as moſt of us are, in a ſtate of mediocrity; when by diſſipation and indolence, by injuſtice and iniquity, by malice and obſtinacy, we ſhall have procured from vice all the rewards that we can expect, what ſhall we have gained? Cities? Provinces? Kingdoms? A long and proſperous reign? God hath not left theſe to our choice. His love would not ſuffer him to expoſe us to a temptation ſo violent. Accordingly we put up our ſouls at a lower price. See this old man, rather dead than alive, bowing under his age, ſtooping down, and ſtepping into the grave; at what price does he exchange his ſoul? at the price of a few days of a dying life; a few pleaſures, ſmothered under a pile of years, if I may ſpeak ſo, or buried under the ice of old age. That officer in the army, who thinks he alone

underſtands

underſtands real grandeur; at what rate does he value his ſoul? He loſes it for the ſake of the falſe glory of ſwearing expertly, and of uniting blaſphemy and politeneſs. What does yon mechanic get for his ſoul? One acre of land, a cottage bigger and leſs inconvenient than that of his neighbour.

Unmanly wretches! If we be bent on renouncing our dignity, let us, however, keep up ſome appearance of greatneſs. Sordid ſouls! if we will reſign our nobleſt pretenſions, let us do it, however, in favour of ſome other pretenſions, that are real. "Be aſtoniſhed, O ye heavens, at this! and be ye horribly afraid; for my people have committed two evils: they have forſaken me, the fountain of living waters, and have hewed them out ciſterns, broken ciſterns, that can hold no water," Jer. ii. 12. Do you perceive, my brethren, the force of this complaint, which God anciently uttered over his people the Jews, and which he now utters over us? Neither genius nor erudition can explain it. Could they, you might perhaps underſtand it. A certain elevation, a certain dignity of ſoul, ſingular ſentiments of heart, are the only expoſitors of theſe affecting words. Therefore, I fear, they are unintelligible to moſt of you. "Be aſtoniſhed, O ye heavens, at this! and be ye horribly afraid; for my people have committed two evils: they have forſaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out ciſterns, broken ciſterns, that can hold no water." God loves us, he deſires we ſhould love him. He has done every thing to conciliate our eſteem. For us he ſent his Son into the world. For us he diſarmed death. For us he opened an eaſy path to a glorious eternity. And all this, to render himſelf maſter of our hearts, and to engage us to return him love for love, life for life. We reſiſt all theſe attractives, we prefer other objects before him.

No matter, he would pafs this ingratitude, if the objects, which we prefer before him, were capable of making us happy; if, at leaft, they bore any apparent proportion to thofe, which he offereth to our hopes. But what arouſeth his diſpleaſure, what provokes his juſt indignation, what excites reproaches, that would cleave our hearts aſunder, were they capable of feeling, is the vanity of the objects, which we prefer before him. The ſoul, in exchange for which the whole world would not be a ſufficient conſideration, this ſoul we often give for the moſt mean, the moſt vile, the moſt contemptible part of the world. "O ye heavens! be aſtoniſhed at this, at this be ye horribly afraid; for my people have committed two evils: they have forſaken me, the fountain of the living waters, and hewed them out ciſterns, broken ciſterns, that can hold no water."

But do we know, ungrateful that we are, do we know, that if the hardneſs of our hearts prevent our feeling in particular the energy of this reproof, and in general the evidence of the reflections, that make the ſubſtance of this diſcourſe; do we know that a day will come, when we ſhall feel them in all their force? Do we know, that there is now a place, where the truth of our text appears in a clear but a terrible light? Yes, my brethren, this reflection is perhaps eſſential to our diſcourſe, this perhaps approaches neareſt to the meaning of Jeſus Chriſt; perhaps Jeſus Chriſt, in theſe words, *What ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?* meant to inform us of the diſpoſition of a man in deſpair, who, immerſed in all the miſeries that can excruciate a ſoul, ſurpriſed at having parted with ſuch a ſoul at a price ſo ſmall, ſtricken with the enormous crime of loſing it, wiſhes, but too late, to give every thing to recover it.

Ideas, like theſe, we never propoſe to you without reluctance. Motives of another kind

ſhould

ſhould ſuffice for chriſtians. Learn the worth of your ſouls. Enter into the plan of your Creator, who created them capable of eternal felicity; and into that of your Redeemer, who died to enable you to arrive at it. Againſt all the deceitful promiſes, which the world, the fleſh, and the devil, uſe to ſeduce you, oppoſe theſe words of Jeſus Chriſt, *What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* May God inſpire you with theſe noble ſentiments! To him be honour and glory for ever.—Amen.

a powerful sermon

FEB 17 1966

SERMON

SERMON VI.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST.

ISAIAH ix. 6, 7.

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his *government and peace* there shall be *no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it, with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever.*

I ANTICIPATE the festival, which the goodness, or rather the magnificence of God, invites you to celebrate on Wednesday next. All nature seems to take part in the memorable event, which on that day we shall commemorate, I mean the birth of the Saviour of the world. Herod turns pale on his throne; the devils tremble in hell; the wise men of the east suspend all their speculations, and observe no sign in the firmament, except that which conducts them to the place where lies the incarnate Word, *God manifest in the flesh*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. an angel from heaven is the herald of the astonishing event, and tells the Shepherds, *Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people, for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord*, Luke ii. 10, 11. *the multitude of the heavenly host* eagerly descend to congratulate men on the Word's assumption of mortal flesh, on his *dwelling among* men, in order to enable them to *behold his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full*

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of grace and truth, John i. 14. they make the air resound with these acclamations, *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men*, Luke ii. 14.

What think ye? Does this festival require no preparation of you? Do you imagine that you shall celebrate it as you ought, if you content yourselves with attending on a few discourses, during which, perhaps, while you are present in body, you may be absent in spirit; or with laying aside your temporal cares, and your most turbulent passions, at the church-gates, in order to take them up again, as soon as divine service ends? The king Messiah is about to make his triumphant entry among you. With what pomp do *the children of this world*, who are *wise*, and, we may add, magnificent *in their generation*, Luke xvi. 8. celebrate the entries of their princes? They strew the roads with flowers, they raise triumphal arches, they express their joy in shouts of victory, and in songs of praise. Come, then, my brethren, let us to-day *prepare the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight*, Matt. iii. 3. let us *be joyful together before the Lord*, let us *make a joyful noise before the Lord the King, for he cometh to judge the earth*, Psal. xcviii. 6, 9. or, to speak in a more intelligible, and in a more evangelical manner, Come, ye miserable sinners, loaden with the unsupportable burden of your sins; come, ye troubled consciences, uneasy at the remembrance of your many idle words, many criminal thoughts, many abominable actions; come, ye poor mortals, *tossed with tempests and not comforted*, Isa. liv. 11. condemned first to bear the infirmities of nature, the caprices of society, the vicissitudes of age, the turns of fortune, and then the horrors of death, and the frightful night of the tomb; come, behold *The Wonderful, The Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace*; take him into your

arms, learn to desire nothing more, when you possess him. May God enable each of you, in transports of joy, to say, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.* Amen.

You have heard the prophecy, on which our meditations in this discourse are to turn. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it, with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever." These words are more dazzling than clear: let us fix their true meaning; and, in order to ascertain that, let us divide this discourse into two parts,

I. Let us explain the prediction.

II. Let us shew its accomplishment.

In the first part, we will prove, that the prophet had the Messiah in view; and, in the second, that our Jesus had fully answered the design of the prophet, and hath accomplished, in the most just and sublime of all senses, the whole prediction: *Unto us a child is born*, and so on.

I. Let us explain the prophet's prediction, and let us fix on the extraordinary child, to whom he gives the magnificent titles in the text. Indeed, the grandeur of the titles sufficiently determines the meaning of the prophet; for to whom, except to the Messiah, can these appellations belong, *The Wonderful, The Counsellor, The mighty God, The Prince of Peace, The everlasting Father?* This natural sense of the text, is supported by the authority of an inspired writer, and what is, if not of any great weight in point of argument, at least, very singular as an historical fact, it is supported by the authority of an angel.

gel. The inspired writer, whom we mean, is St. Matthew, who manifestly alludes to the words of the text, by quoting those which precede them, which are connected with them, and which he applies to the times of the Messiah: for, having related the imprisonment of John, and, in consequence of that, the retiring of Jesus Christ into Galilee, he adds, that the divine Saviour *came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up*, Matt. iv. 12. The angel, of whom I spoke, is Gabriel; who, when he declared to Mary the choice which God had made of her to be the mother of the Messiah, applied to her Son the characters, by which Isaiah describes the child in the text, and paints him in the same colours: *Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever: and of his kingdom there shall be no end*, Luke i. 31, &c.

How conclusive soever these proofs may appear in favor of the sense we have given of the prophecy, they do not satisfy this intractable age, which is always ready to embrace any thing that seems likely to enervate the truths of religion. Sincerity requires us to acknowledge, that although our prophecy is clear of itself, yet there ariseth some obscurity from the order in which it is placed, and from its connection with the foregoing and following verses. On each we will

endeavor

endeavor to throw some light, and for this purpose, we will go back, and analyse this, and the two preceding chapters.

When Isaiah delivered this prophecy, Ahaz reigned over the kingdom of Judah, and Pekah, the son of Remaliah, over that of Israel. You cannot be ignorant of the mutual jealousy of these two kingdoms. There is often more hatred between two parties, whose religion is almost the same, than between those whose doctrines are in direct opposition. Each considers the other as near the truth: each is jealous lest the other should obtain it: and, it is more likely that they, who hold the essential truths of religion, should surpass others sooner than they, who raze the very foundations of it, the former are greater objects of envy than the latter. The kingdoms of Israel and Judah were often more envenomed against one another than against foreigners. This was the case in the reign of Ahaz, king of Judah. Pekah, king of Israel, to the shame of the ten tribes, discovered a disposition like that, which hath sometimes made the christian world blush; I mean, that a Prince, who worshipped the true God, in order to destroy his brethren, made an alliance with an idolater. He allied himself to Rezin, a pagan Prince, who reigned over that part of Syria, which constituted the kingdom of Damascus. The kingdom of Judah had often yielded to the forces of these kings, even when each had separately made war with it. Now they were united; and intended jointly to fall on the Jews, and to overwhelm, rather than to besiege Jerusalem. Accordingly, the consternation was so great in the holy city, that, the scripture says, *The heart of Ahaz was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind*, Isa. vii. 2.

Although the kingdom of Judah had too well deserved the punishment, which threatened it;

and

and although a thouſand outrages, with which the inhabitants had inſulted the Majeſty of heaven, ſeemed to guarantee their country to the enemy, yet God came to their aſſiſtance. He was touched, if not with the ſincerity of their repentance, at leaſt with the exceſs of their miſeries. He commanded Iſaiah to encourage their hopes. He even promiſed them, not only that all the deſigns of their enemies ſhould be rendered abortive: but that the two confederate kingdoms, *within three score and five years*, ver. 8. ſhould be entirely deſtroyed. Moreover, he gave Ahaz the choice of a ſign to convince himſelf of the truth of the promiſe. Ahaz was one of the moſt wicked kings, that ever ſat on the throne of Judah: ſo that the ſcripture could give no worſe character of this prince, nor deſcribe his perſeverance in ſin more fully, than by ſaying, that he *was always Ahaz.** He refuſed to chooſe a ſign, not becauſe he felt one of thoſe noble emotions, which makes a man ſubmit to the teſtimony of God without any more proof of its truth than the teſtimony itſelf; but becauſe he was inclined to infidelity and ingratitude, and, probably, becauſe he truſted in his ally, the king of Aſſyria. Notwithſtanding his refuſal, God gave him ſigns, and informed him, that before the prophet's two children, one of whom was already born, and the other would be born ſhortly, ſhould arrive at years of diſcretion, the two confederate kings ſhould retreat from Judea, and ſhould be entirely deſtroyed.

Of the firſt child, ſee what the ſeventh chapter of the Revelations of our prophet ſays. We are there told, that this ſon of the prophet was named Shearjaſhub, that is, *the remnant ſhall return*, ver. 3. a name expreſſive of the meaning of

* 2 Chron. xxviii. 22. *This* is that *king Ahaz*. Eng. Verſion. *C'eſtoit* toujours *le roi Achaz*. Fr. *Idem* erat *rex Achaz*. Jun. Tremel.

of the sign, which declared that the Jews should return from their rebellions, and that God would return from his anger. The other child, then unborn, is mentioned in the eighth chapter, where it is said *the prophetess bare a son*, ver. 3.

God commanded the prophet to take the first child, and to carry him to that pool, or piece of water, which was formed by the waters of Siloah, which supplied the stream known by the name of *The fuller's conduit*, 2 Kings xviii. 17. and which was at the foot of the eastern wall of Jerusalem. The prophet was ordered to produce the child in the presence of all the affrighted people, and to say to them, *Before this child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest, shall be forsaken of both her kings*, Isa. vii. 16. If this translation be retained, *the land* signifies the kingdom of Israel, and that of Syria, from which the enemy came, and which, on account of their coming, the Jews *abhorred*. I should rather render the words, *the land, for which thou art afraid*, and by *the land* understand Judea, which was then in a very dangerous state. But the prophecy began to be accomplished in both senses about a year after it was uttered. Tiglath Pileser, king of Assyria, not only drew off the forces of Rezin and Pekah, from the siege of Jerusalem, but he drave them also from their own countries. He first attacked Damascus. Rezin quitted his intended conquest, and returned to defend his capital, where he was slain; and all his people were carried into captivity, 2 Kings xvi. 9. Tiglath Pileser then marched into the kingdom of Israel, and victory marched along with him at the head of his army, 1 Chron. v. 26. He subdued the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, all the inhabitants of Galilee, and the tribe of Nephthalim, and carried them captives beyond Euphrates; and sixty five years after, that is, sixty

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five years after the prediction of the total ruin of the kingdom of Israel by the prophet Amos, the prophecy was fulfilled by Salmanassar, chap. vii. 11. according to the language of our prophet, *within three score and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people*, Isa. vii. 8. Thus was this prophecy accomplished, *before this child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land, for which thou art afraid, shall be forsaken of both her kings.*

God determined that the prophet's second child should also be a sign of the truth of the same promise. He assured Isaiah, that before the child, who should shortly be born, could learn to articulate the first sounds which children were taught to pronounce; "before the child should have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus, and the spoil of Samaria," that is, of the kingdom of Israel, "should be taken away by the king of Assyria," chap. viii. 4. This is the same promise confirmed by a second sign. God usually giveth more than one, when he confirmeth any very interesting prediction, as we see in the history of Pharaoh, and the patriarch Joseph, Gen. xli. 1, &c.

But, as all the mercies that were bestowed on the Jews from the time of Abraham, were grounded on the covenant, which God had made with that patriarch, their common father and head; or rather, as, since the fall, men could expect no favor of God but in virtue of the mediator of the church; it is generally to be observed in the prophecies, that when God gave them a promise, he directed their attention to this grand object. Either the idea of the covenant, or the idea of the mediator, was a seal, which God put to his promises, and a bar against the unbelief and distrust of his people. Every thing might be expected from a God, whose goodness was so infinite,

nite, as to prepare such a noble victim for the salvation of mankind. He, who would confine Satan in everlasting chains, and vanquish sin and death, was fully able to deliver his people from the incursions of Rezin, and Pekah, the son of Remaliah. To remove the present fears of the Jews, God reminds them of the wonders of his love, which he had promised to display in favor of his church, in ages to come: and commands his prophet to say to them, "Ye trembling leaves of the wood, shaken with every wind, peace be to you! Ye timorous Jews, cease your fears! let not the greatness of this temporal deliverance, which I now promise you, excite your doubts! God hath favors incomparably greater in store for you, they shall be your guarantees for those, which ye are afraid to expect. Ye are in covenant with God. Ye have a right to expect those displays of his love in your favor which are least credible. Remember the *blessed seed*, which he promised to your ancestors, Gen. xxii. 18. "Behold! a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel," Isa. vii. 14. The spirit of prophecy, that animates me, enables me to penetrate through all the ages that separate the present moment from that in which the promise shall be fulfilled. I see the divine child, my "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," Heb. xi. 1. and grounded on the word of that God, *who changeth not*, Mal. iii. 6. who "is not a man, that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent," Numb. iii. 19. I dare speak of a miracle, which will be wrought eight hundred years hence, as if it had been wrought to-day, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

This,

This, my brethren, is the prophet's ſcope in the three chapters which we have analyzed, and particularly in the text. But, if any one of you receive our expoſition without any farther diſcuſſion, he will diſcover more docility than we require, and he would betray his credulity without proving his conviction. How often doth a commentator ſubſtitute his own opinions for thoſe of his author, and by forging, if I may be allowed to ſpeak ſo, a new text, elude the difficulties of that which he ought to explain? Let us act more ingenuouſly. There are two difficulties, which attend our comment; one is a particular, the other is a general difficulty.

The *particular* difficulty is this. We have ſuppoſed, that the myſterious child, ſpoken of in our text, is the ſame, of whom the prophet ſpeaks, when he ſays, "A virgin ſhall conceive and bear a ſon, and ſhall call his name Immanuel:" and that this child is different from that, whom Iſaiah gave for a ſign of the preſent temporal deliverance, and of whom it is ſaid, "before the child ſhall know to refuſe the evil, and chooſe the good, the land, that thou abhorreſt, ſhall be forſaken of both her kings." This ſuppoſition does not ſeem to agree with the text; read the following verſes, which are taken from the ſeventh chapter. "Behold! a virgin ſhall conceive, and bear a ſon, and ſhall call his name Immanuel: Butter and honey ſhall he eat, that he may know to refuſe the evil, and chooſe the good. But before the child ſhall know to refuſe the evil, and chooſe the good, the land, that thou abhorreſt, ſhall be forſaken of both her kings," ver. 14, 15, 16. Do not the laſt words, "before the child ſhall know to refuſe the evil, and chooſe the good," ſeem to belong to the words which immediately precede them, "Behold! a virgin ſhall conceive, and bear a ſon?" *Immanuel*, then, who was to be born of a *virgin*, could not be the Meſſiah;

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the prophet must mean the child, of whom he said, *before he know to refuse the evil, and choose the good*, Judea shall be delivered from the two confederate kings.

How indissoluble soever this objection may appear, it is only an apparent difficulty, and it lies less in the nature of the thing, than in the arrangement of the terms. Represent to yourselves the prophet executing the order, which God had given him, as the third verse of the seventh chapter relates. "Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shearjashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool." Imagine Isaiah, in the presence of the Jews, holding his son Shearjashub in his arms, and addressing them in this manner. The token, that God gives you, of your present deliverance, that he is still your God, and that ye are still his covenant people, is the renewal of the promise to you, which he made to your ancestors, concerning the Messiah: to convince you of the truth of what I assert, I discharge my commission, "Behold! a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel," that is, *God with us*. He shall be brought up like the children of men, "butter and honey shall he eat, until he know to refuse the evil, and choose the good," that is, until he arrive at years of maturity. In virtue of this promise, which will not be ratified till some ages have expired, behold what I promise you now; *before the child*, not before the child, whom, I said just now, *a virgin should bear*: but before the child in my arms, (the phrase may be rendered *before this child*) before Shearjashub, whom I now lift up, "shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land, for which ye are in trouble, shall be forsaken of both her kings." You see, my brethren, *the child*, whom, the prophet said, *a virgin should conceive*, could not be Shearjashub, who was actually present in his father's

father's arms. The difficulty, therefore, is only apparent, and, as I obſerved before, it lay in the arrangement of the terms, and not in the nature of the thing. This is our anſwer to what I called a *particular* difficulty.

A *general* objection may be made againſt the manner in which we have explained theſe chapters, and in which, in general, we explain other prophecies. Allow me to ſtate this objection in all its force, and, if I may uſe the expreſſion, in all its enormity, in order to ſhew you, in the end, all its levity and folly.

The odious objection is this. An unbeliever would ſay, the three chapters of Iſaiah, of which you have given an arbitrary analyſis, are equivocal and obſcure, like the greateſt part of thoſe compilations, which compoſe the book of the viſionary flights of this prophet, and like all the writings, that are called *predictions*, *prophecies*, *revelations*. Obſcurity is the grand character of them, even in the opinion of thoſe who have given ſublime and curious explanations of them. They are capable of ſeveral ſenſes. Who hath received authority to develope thoſe ambiguous writings, to determine the true meaning, among the many different ideas, which they excite in the reader, and to each of which the terms are alike applicable! During ſeventeen centuries, chriſtians have racked their invention to put a ſenſe on the writings of the prophets advantageous to chriſtianity, and the greateſt geniuſes have endeavored to interpret them in favor of the chriſtian religion. Men, who have been famous for their erudition and knowledge, have taken the moſt laborious pains to methodize theſe writings; one generation of great men hath ſucceeded another in the undertaking; is it aſtoniſhing that ſome degree of ſucceſs hath attended their labors, and that by dint of indefatigable induſtry, they have rendered thoſe prophecies venerable, which

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would have been accounted dark and void of design, if less pains had been taken to adapt a design, and less violence had been used in arranging them in order?

This is the objection in all its force, and, as I said before, in all its enormity. Let us inquire whether we can give a solution proportional to this boasted objection of infidelity. Our answer will be comprised in a chain of propositions, which will guard you against those, who find mystical meanings, where there are none, as well as against those, who disown them, where they are. To these purposes attend to the following propositions.

1. They were not the men of our age, who forged the book, in which we imagine, we discover such profound knowledge: we know it is a book of the most venerable antiquity, and we can demonstrate that it is the most ancient book in the world.

2. This venerable antiquity, however, is not the chief ground of our admiration: the benevolence of its design; the grandeur of its ideas; the sublimity of its doctrines; the holiness of its precepts; are, according to our notion of things, if not absolute proofs of its divinity, at least, advantageous presumptions in its favor.

3. Among divers truths which it contains, and which, it may be supposed, some superior geniuses might have discovered, I meet with some, the attainment of which I cannot reasonably attribute to the human mind: of this kind are some predictions, obscure, I grant, to those to whom they were first delivered, but rendered very clear since by the events. Such are these two among many others. The people, who are in covenant with God, shall be excluded; and people, who are not, shall be admitted. I see the accomplishment of these predictions with my own eyes, in the rejection of the Jews, and in the calling of the Gentiles.

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4. The ſuperior characters, which ſignalize theſe books, give them the right of being myſterious in ſome places, without expoſing them to the charge of being equivocal, or void of meaning; for ſome works have acquired this right. When an author hath given full proof of his capacity in ſome propoſitions, which are clear and intelligible; and when he expreſſeth himſelf, in other places, in a manner obſcure, and hard to be underſtood, he is not to be taxed, all on a ſudden, with writing irrationally. A meaning is to be ſought in his expreſſions. It is not to be ſuppoſed, that geniuſes of the higheſt order ſink at once beneath the loweſt minds. Why do we not entertain ſuch notions of our prophets? Why is not the ſame juſtice due to the extraordinary men, whoſe reſpectable writings we are pleading for; to our Iſaiahs, and Jeremiahs, which is allowed to Juvenal and Virgil? What! ſhall ſome pretty thought of the latter, ſhall ſome ingenious ſtroke of the former, conciliate more reſpect to them, than the noble ſentiments of God, the ſublime doctrines, and the virtuous precepts of the holy ſcriptures, can obtain for the writers of the bible?

5. We do not pretend, however, to abuſe that reſpect, which it would be unjuſt to withhold from our authors. We do not pretend to ſay that every obſcure paſſage contains a myſtery, or that, whenever a paſſage appears unintelligible, we have a right to explain it in favor of the doctrine, which we profeſs: but we think it right to conſider any paſſage in theſe books prophetical, when it has the three following marks.

The firſt is *the inſufficiency of the literal meaning.* I mean, a text muſt be accounted prophetical, when it cannot be applied, without offering violence to the language, to any event, that fell out when it was ſpoken, or to any then preſent, or paſt object.

2. The second character of a prophecy, is *an infallible commentary.* I mean, when an author of acknowledged authority, gives a prophetical sense to a passage under consideration, we ought to submit to his authority, and adopt his meaning.

3. The last character is *a perfect conformity between the prediction and the event.* I mean, when prophecies, compared with events, appear to have been completely accomplished, several ages after they had been promulged, it cannot be fairly urged that the conformity was a lucky hit: but, it ought to be acknowledged, that the prophecy proceeded from God, who, being alone capable of foreseeing what would happen, was alone capable of foretelling the event, in a manner so circumstantial and exact. All these characters unite in favor of the text, which we have been explaining, and in favor of the three chapters, which we have, in general, expounded.

The first character, that is, the insufficiency of a literal sense, agrees with our explication. Let any event, in the time of Isaiah, be named, any child born then, or soon after, of whom the prophet could reasonably affirm what he does in our text, and in the other verse, which we have connected with it. "A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

The second distinguishing mark, that is, an infallible commentary, agrees with our explication. Our evangelists and apostles, those venerable men, whose mission comes recommended to us by the most glorious miracles, by the healing of the sick, by the expulsion of demons, by the raising of the dead, by a general subversion of all nature,

ture, our evangelists and apostles took these passages in the same sense, in which we take them, they understood them of the Messiah, as we have observed before.

The third character, that is, a perfect conformity between event and prediction, agrees also with our explication. We actually find *a child*, some ages after the time of Isaiah, who exactly answers the description of him, of whom the prophet spoke. The features are similar, and we own the likeness. Our Jesus was really born of *a virgin*; he was truly *Immanuel, God with us:* in him are really united, all the titles, and all the perfections, of the "Wonderful, The Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father;" as we will presently prove. Can we help giving a mysterious meaning to these passages? Can we refuse to acknowledge, that the prophet intended to speak of the Messiah? These are the steps, and this is the end of our meditation in favor of the mystical sense, which we have ascribed to the words of the text.

Would to God, the enemies of our mysteries would open their eyes to these objects, and examine the weight of these arguments! Would to God, a love, I had almost said a rage, for independency, for a system that indulges, and inflames the passions, had not put some people on opposing these proofs! Infidelity and scepticism would have made less havoc among us, and would not have decoyed away so many disciples from truth and virtue! And would to God also, christian ministers would never attempt to attack the systems of infidels and sceptics without the armour of demonstration! Would to God, love of the marvellous may no more dazzle the imaginations of those, who ought to be guided by truth alone! And would to God, the simplicity and the superstition of the people may never more contribute to support that authority, which

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some rash and dogmatical geniuses usurp! Truth should not borrow the arms of falsehood to defend itself; nor virtue those of vice. Advantages should not be given to unbelievers and heretics, under pretence of opposing heresy and unbelief. We should render to God *a reasonable service*, Rom. xii. 1. we should be all *spiritual men, judging all things*, 1 Cor. ii. 15. according to the expression of the apostle. But I add no more on this article.

Hitherto we have spoken, if I may say so, to reason only, it is time now to speak to conscience. We have been preaching by argumeats and syllogisms to the understanding, it is time now to preach by sentiments to the heart. Religion is not made for the mind alone, it is particularly addressed to the heart, and to the heart I would prove, that our Jesus hath accomplished, in the most sublime of all senses, this prophecy in the text: *Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given*, and so on. This is our second part.

II. The terms *throne*, *kingdom*, *government*, are metaphorical, when they are applied to God, to his Messiah, to the end, which religion proposeth, and to the felicity, which it procures. They are very imperfect, and, if I may venture to say so, very low and mean, when they are used to represent objects of such infinite grandeur. No, there is nothing sufficiently noble in the characters of the greatest kings, nothing wise enough in their maxims, nothing gentle enough in their government, nothing pompous enough in their courts, nothing sufficiently glorious in their exploits, to represent fully the grandeur and glory of our Messiah.

Who is a king? What is a throne? Why have we masters? Why is sovereign power lodged in a few hands? and what determines mankind to lay aside their independence, and to lose their beloved liberty? The whole implies,

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my brethren, some mortifying truths. We have not knowledge sufficient to guide ourselves, and we need minds wiser than our own to inspect and to direct our conduct. We are indigent, and superior beings must supply our wants. We have enemies, and we must have guardians to protect us.

Miserable men! how have you been deceived in your expectations? What disorders could anarchy have produced, greater than those, which have sometimes proceeded from sovereign authority? You sought guides to direct you: but you have sometimes fallen under the tuition of men, who, far from being able to conduct a whole people, knew not how to guide themselves. You sought nursing fathers, to succour you in your indigence: but you have fallen sometimes into the hands of men, who had no other designs than to impoverish their people, to enrich themselves with the substance, and to fatten themselves with the blood of their subjects. You sought guardians to protect you from your enemies: but you have sometimes found executioners, who have used you with greater barbarity, than your most bloody enemies would have done.

But, all these melancholy truths apart, suppose the fine notions, which we form of kings and of royalty, of sovereign power, and of the hands that hold it, were realized: how incapable are kings, and how inadequate is their government, to the relief of the innumerable wants of an immortal soul! Suppose kings of the most tender sentiments, formidable in their armies, and abundant in their treasuries; could they heal the maladies, that afflict us here, or could they quench our painful thirst for felicity hereafter? Ye Cæsars! Ye Alexanders! Ye Trajans! Ye, who were, some of you, like Titus, the parents of your people, and the delights of mankind, ye thunderbolts of war! Ye idols of the world!

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What doth all your pomp avail me? Of what use to me are all your personal qualifications, and all your regal magnificence? Can you, can they, dissipate the darkness, that envelopes me; calm the conscience, that accuses and torments me; reconcile me to God; free me from the controul of my commanding and tyrannical passions; deliver me from death; and discover immortal happiness to me? Ye earthly gods! ignorant and wretched like me; objects like me of the displeasure of God; like me, exposed to the miseries of life; slaves to your passions like me; condemned like me to that frightful night in which death involveth all mankind; ye can relieve neither your own miseries nor mine!

Shew me a government, that supplies these wants: that is the empire I seek. Shew me a king, who will conduct me to the felicity, to which I aspire: such a king I long to obey. My brethren, this empire we are preaching to you: Such a king is the king Messiah. *Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called,* WONDERFUL, because he is the substance and the centre of all the wondrous works of God.

But purify your imaginations, and do not always judge of man as if he were a being destitute of reason and intelligence. When we speak of man, do not conceive of a being of this present world only; a creature placed for a few days in human society, wanting nothing but food and raiment, and the comforts of a temporal life: but attend to your own hearts. In the sad circumstances, into which sin hath brought you, what are your most important wants? We have already insinuated them. You need knowledge; you need reconciliation with God; you want support through all the miseries of life; and you need consolation against the fear of death.

Well!

Well! all these wants the king Messiah supplies. I am going to prove it, but I conjure you, at the same time, not only to believe, but to act. I would, by publishing the design of the Saviour's incarnation, engage you to concur in it. By explaining to you the nature of his empire, I would fain teach you the duties of his subjects. By celebrating the glory of the king Messiah, I long to see it displayed among you in all its splendid magnificence.

You want *knowledge*. You will find it in the king Messiah. He is the COUNSELLOR. He is the *true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*, John i. 9. *In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, Col. ii. 3. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon him, the Lord hath appointed him to preach good tidings unto the meek*, Isa. lxi. 1. The Spirit of the Lord rests upon him, the *spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord*, chap. xi. 2. He hath *the tongue of the learned*, chap. l. 4. and the wisdom of the wise. Ask him to explain to you the grand appearances of nature, which exercise the speculations of the most transcendent geniuses, and absorb their defective reason, and all his answers will discover the most profound and perfect knowledge of them. Inquire of him whence all the visible creation came, the luminaries of heaven, and the magnificent treasures of the earth. Ask him to reveal to you the *God, who hideth himself*, Isa. xlv. 15. Ask him the cause of those endless disorders, which mix with that profusion of wisdom, which appears in the world. Ask him whence the blessings come, which we enjoy, and whence the calamities, that afflict us. Ask him what is the origin, the nature, the destiny, the end of man. Of all these articles the COUNSELLOR will tell you more than Plato, and Socrates, and all the philosophers,

philoſophers, who only *felt after* the truth, Acts xvii. 27. who themſelves diſcovered, and taught others to ſee, only a few rays of light darkened with prejudices and errors.

This is the firſt idea of the king Meſſiah; this is the firſt ſource of the duties of his ſubjects, and of the diſpoſitions, with which they ought to celebrate his nativity, and with which alone they can celebrate it in a proper manner. To celebrate properly the feſtival of his nativity, truth muſt be eſteemed; we muſt be deſirous of attaining knowledge; we muſt come from the ends of the earth, like the wiſe men of the eaſt, to contemplate the miracles, which the Meſſiah diſplays in the new world; like Mary, we muſt be all attention to receive the doctrine, that proceeds from his ſacred mouth; like the multitude, we muſt follow him into deſerts and mountains, to hear his admirable ſermons. This is the firſt duty, which the feſtival, that you are to celebrate next Wedneſday, demands. Prepare yourſelves to keep it in this manner.

You want *reconciliation* with God, and this is the grand work of the king Meſſiah. He is THE PRINCE OF PEACE. He terminates the fatal war, which ſin hath kindled between God and you, by obtaining the pardon of your paſt ſins, and by enabling you to avoid the commiſſion of ſin for the future. He obtains the pardon of paſt ſins for you. How can a merciful God reſiſt the ardent prayers, which the Redeemer of mankind addreſſeth to him in behalf of thoſe poor ſinners, for whom he ſacrificed himſelf? How can a merciful God reſiſt the plea of the blood of his Son, which cries for mercy for the miſerable poſterity of Adam? As the king Meſſiah reconciles you to God, by obtaining the pardon of your paſt ſin, ſo he reconciles you, by procuring ſtrength to enable you to avoid it for time to come. Having calmed thoſe paſſions which

prevented

prevented your knowing what was right, and your loving what was lovely, he gave you laws of equity and love. How can you resist, after you have known him, the motives, on which his laws are founded? Every difficulty disappears, when examples so alluring are seen, and when you are permitted, under your most discouraging weaknesses, to approach the treasures of grace, which he hath opened to you, and to derive purity from its source. Doth gratitude know any difficulties? Is not every act of obedience easy to a mind animated by a love as vehement as that, which cannot but be felt for a Saviour, who in the tenderest manner hath loved us?

This is the second idea of the king Messiah, this is the second source of the duties of his subjects, and of the dispositions essential to a worthy celebration of the feast of his nativity. Come next Wednesday deeply sensible of the danger of having that God for your enemy, who holds your destiny in his mighty hands, and whose commands all creatures obey. Come with an eager desire of reconciliation to him. Come and hear the voice of *the Prince of Peace*, who publisheth *peace; peace to him that is near, and to him that is far off*, Isa. lvii. 19. While Moses mediates a covenant between God and the Israelites, on the top of the holy mountain, let not Israel violate the capital article at the foot of it. While Jesus Christ is descending to reconcile you to God, do not declare war against God; insult him not by voluntary rebellions, after he hath voluntarily delivered you from the slavery of sin, under which you groaned. Return not again to those sins, which *separated between you and your God*, Isa. lix. 2. and which would do it again, though Jesus should become incarnate again, and should offer himself every day to expiate them.

You need *support under the calamities of this life*, and this also you will find in the king Mes-

siah. He is THE MIGHTY GOD, and he will tell you, while you are suffering the heaviest temporal afflictions, although "the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, *yet* my kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed," chap. liv. 10. Under your severest tribulations, he will assure you, that *all things work together for good to them that love God*, Rom. viii. 28. He will teach you to shout victory under an apparent defeat, and to sing this triumphant song, "Thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ," 2 Cor. ii. 14. "In all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us," Rom. viii. 37.

This is the third idea of the king Messiah, and this is the third source of the duties of his subjects, and of the dispositions which are necessary to the worthily celebrating of the festival of his nativity. Fall in, christian soul! with the design of thy Saviour, who, by elevating thy desires above the world, would elevate thee above all the catastrophes of it. Come, behold Messiah, the king, lodging in a stable, and lying in a manger: hear him saying to his disciples, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the son of man hath not where to lay his head," Matt. viii. 20. Learn from this example not to place thy happiness in the possession of earthly good. Die to the world, die to its pleasures, die to its pomps. Aspire after other ends, and nobler joys, than those of the children of this world, and then worldly vicissitudes cannot shake thy bliss.

Finally, You have need of one *to comfort you under the fears of death*, by opening the gates of eternal felicity to you, and by satiating your avidity of existence and elevation. This consolation the king Messiah affords. He is the *everlasting Father*, THE FATHER OF ETERNITY;

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his throne shall be built up for all generations, Pſal. lxxxix. 4. he hath received "dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, ſhould ſerve him; his dominion is an everlaſting dominion, which ſhall not paſs away, and his kingdom that which ſhall not be deſtroyed," Dan. vii. 14. and his ſubjects muſt reign eternally with him. When thou, chriſtian! art confined to thy dying bed, he will approach thee with all the attractive charms of his power and grace: he will ſay to thee, *Fear not, thou worm Jacob*, Iſa. xli. 14. he will whiſper theſe comfortable words in thine ear, "When thou paſſeſt through the waters, I will be with thee: and when through the rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee: when thou walkeſt through the fire, thou ſhalt not be burned; neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee," chap. xliii. 2. He will open heaven to thee, as he opened it to St. Stephen; and he will ſay to thee, as he ſaid to the converted thief, "To-day ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe," Luke xxiii. 43.

This is the fourth idea of the king Meſſiah, and this is the fourth ſource of the duties of his ſubjects. How glorious is the feſtival of his nativity! What grand, noble, and ſublime ſentiments doth it require of us! The ſubjects of the king Meſſiah, the children of *the everlaſting Father*, ſhould conſider the economy of time in its true point of view, they ſhould compare "things which are ſeen, which are temporal, *with* things which are not ſeen, which are eternal," 2 Cor. iv. 18. They ſhould fix their attention upon the eternity, fill their imaginations with the glory, of the world to come, and learn, by juſt notions of immortality, to eſtimate the preſent life; the "declining ſhadow; the withering graſs; the fading flower; the dream, that flyeth away; the vapour, that vaniſheth," and is irrecoverably loſt, Pſal. cii. 11. Iſa. xl. 7. Job xx. 8. and James iv. 14.

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These, my brethren, are the characters of your king Messiah, these are the characters of the divine child, whose birth you are to celebrate next Wednesday, and in these ways only can you celebrate it as it deserves. We conjure you by that adorable goodness, which we are going to testify to you again; we conjure you by that throne of grace, which God is about to ascend again; we conjure you by those ineffable mercies, which our imaginations cannot fully comprehend, which our minds cannot sufficiently admire, nor all the emotions of our hearts sufficiently esteem; we conjure you to look at, and, if you will pardon the expression, to lose yourselves in these grand objects; we conjure you not to turn our solemn festivals, and our devotional days, into seasons of gaming, irreligion, and dissipation. Let us submit ourselves to the king Messiah; let us engage ourselves to his government; let his dominion be the ground of all our joy.

"O most mighty! thou art fairer than the children of men. Grace is poured into thy lips, therefore God hath blessed thee for ever!" Psal. xlv. 2. 3. "The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion," saying, "Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies! Thy people shall be willing in the day, when thou shalt assemble thy host in holy pomp!"* Yea, reign over thine enemies,

* We retain the reading of the *French* Bible here; because our author paraphrases the passage after that version. *Ton peuple* sera un peuple plein *de franc vouloir au jour que tu assembleras ton armee en sa sainte pompe. Thy people* shall be *willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness*, &c. The passage seems to be a prophetical allusion to one of those solemn festivals, in which conquerors, and their armies, on their return from battle, offered a part of their spoil, which they had taken from their enemies, to God, from whom the victory came. These *free-will* offerings were carried in grand procession. They were *holy*, because

mies, great King! bow their rebellious wills; prevent their fatal counsels; defeat all their bloody designs! Reign also over thy friends, reign over us! Make us *a willing people!* Assemble all this congregation, when thou shalt come with *thy host in holy pomp!* Let not the flying of the clouds, which will serve thee for a triumphal chariot; let not the pomp of the holy angels in thy train, when thou shalt come to *judge the world in righteousness*, Acts xvii. 31. let not these objects affright and terrify our souls: let them charm and transport us; and, instead of dreading thine approach, let us hasten it by our prayers and sighs! *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, Amen.* To God be honor and glory, for ever and ever.—Amen.

agreeable to the economy, under which the Jews lived; and they were *beautifully* holy, because they were not exacted, but proceeded from the *voluntary* gratitude of the *army*. In large conquests, the troops and the offerings were out of number, like the drops of such a shower of *dew*, as the *morning brought forth* in the *youth*, or *spring* of the year. See 2 Chron. xiv. 13, 14, 15. and xv. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. We have ventured this hint on a passage, which seems not very clear in our version.

SERMON VII.

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

PSALM CXVIII. 15, 16.

The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly. The right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly.

WOMAN! why weepest thou? John xx. 13, 15. was the language of two angels and of Jesus Christ to Mary. The Lord had been crucified. The infant church was in mourning. The enemies of christianity were triumphing. The faith of the disciples was tottering. Mary had set out before dawn of day, to give vent to her grief, to bathe the tomb of her Master with tears, and to render funeral honors to him. In these sad circumstances, the heavens opened, two angels clothed in white garments descended, and placed themselves on the tomb, that inclosed the dear depositum of the love of God to the church. At the fixed moment, they rolled away the stone, and Jesus Christ arose from the grave loaden with the spoils of death. Hither Mary comes to see the dead body, the poor remain of him, *who should have redeemed Israel*, Luke xxiv. 21. and finding the tomb empty, abandons her whole soul to grief, and bursts into floods of tears. The heavenly messengers directly address these comfortable words to her, *Woman! Why weepest thou?* Scarcely had she told them the cause of her grief, before Jesus puts the same question to her, *Woman! Why weepest thou?* And to this language, which insinuateth into her heart, and exciteth,

citeth, if I may venture to speak so, from the bottom of her soul every emotion of tenderness and love, of which she is capable, he adds, *Mary!*

This is the magnificent, this is the affecting object, on which the eyes of all the church are this day fixed. This is the comfortable language which heaven to-day proclaims. For several weeks past you have been in tears. Your churches have been in mourning. Your eyes have beheld only sad and melancholy objects. On the one hand, you have been examining your consciences, and your minds have been overwhelmed with the sorrowful remembrance of broken resolutions, violated vows, and fruitless communions. On the other, you have seen Jesus, betrayed by one disciple, denied by another, forsaken by all; Jesus, delivered by priests to secular powers, and condemned by his judges to die; Jesus, *sweating, as it were, great drops of blood*, Luke xxii. 44, praying in Gethsemane: *O my Father! if it be possible, let this cup pass from me*, Matt. xxvi. 39, and crying on Mount Calvary, *My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?* chap. xxvii. 46. Jesus, lying in the grave: these have been the mournful objects of your late contemplation. At the hearing of this tragical history, conscience trembles; and the whole church, on seeing the Saviour intombed, weeps as if salvation were buried with him. But take courage, thou tremulous conscience! Dry up thy tears, thou church of Jesus Christ! "Loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Sion!" Isa. lii. 2. Come, my brethren, approach the tomb of your Redeemer, no more to lament his death, no more to embalm his sacred body, which hath not been *suffered to see corruption*, Acts ii. 27. but to shout for joy at his resurrection. To this the prophet inviteth us in the text: "The voice of rejoicing and salvation

vation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly."

I have not questioned, whether the psalm in general, and the text in particular, regard the Messiah. The ancient Jews understood the psalm of him; and therefore made use of it formerly among their prayers for his advent. We agree with the Jews, and on this article, we think they are safer guides than many christians. The whole psalm agrees with Jesus Christ, and is applicable to him as well as to David, particularly the famous words that follow the text: "The stone which the builders refused, is become the head-stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing, it is marvellous in our eyes." These words are so unanimously applied to the exaltation, and particularly to the resurrection, of Jesus Christ, in the books of the New Testament, in the gospel of St. Matthew, in that of St. Mark, in that of St. Luke, in the book of Acts, in the epistle to the Romans, and in that to the Ephesians, that it seems needless, methinks, to attempt to prove a matter so fully decided.

The present solemnity demands reflections of another kind, and we will endeavour to shew you,

I. The truth of the event of which the text speaks: *The right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly.*

II. We will justify the joyful acclamations, which are occasioned by it: *The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous.*

I. Let us examine the evidences of the *truth* of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Infidelity denies it, and what perhaps may be no less injurious to christianity, superstition pretends to establish it on falsehood and absurdity. A certain

tain traveller* pretends, that the inhabitants of the holy land still shew travellers *the stone which the builders refused*, and which became *the head-stone of the corner*. In order to guard you against infidelity, we will urge the arguments, which prove the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ: but in order to prevent superstition, we will attribute to each argument no more evidence than what actually belongs to it.

In proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have, 1. Presumption. 2. Proofs. 3. Demonstrations. The circumstances of his burial afford some presumptions; the testimonies of the apostles furnish us with some arguments; and the descent of the holy Spirit on the church furnisheth us with demonstrations.

1. From the circumstances of the burial of Jesus Christ, I derive some *presumptions* in favor of the doctrine of the resurrection. Jesus Christ died. This is an incontestible principle. Our enemies, far from pretending to question this, charge it on christianity as a reproach.

The tomb of Jesus Christ was found empty a few days after his death. This is another incontestible principle. For if the enemies of christianity had retained his body in their possession, they would certainly have produced it for the ruin of the report of his resurrection. Hence ariseth a presumption that Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

If the body of Jesus Christ were not raised from the dead, it must have been stolen away. But this theft is incredible. Who committed it? The enemies of Jesus Christ? Would they have contributed to his glory, by countenancing a report of his resurrection? Would his disciples?

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* Peter Belon. Observ. lib. ii. cap. 83. Belon was a countryman of our author's, a physician of Le Mans, who travelled from 1546 to 1549. His travels were published 1555.

It is probable, they would not: and, it is next to certain, they could not. How could they have undertaken to remove the body? Frail and timorous creatures, people, who fled as soon as they saw him taken into custody; even Peter, the most courageous, trembled at the voice of a servant girl, and three times denied that he knew him; people of this character, would they have dared to resist the authority of the governor? Would they have undertaken to oppose the determination of the Sanhedrim, to force a guard, and to elude, or to overcome, soldiers armed and aware of danger? If Jesus Christ were not risen again, (I speak the language of unbelievers) he had deceived his disciples with vain hopes of his resurrection. How came the disciples not to discover the imposture? Would they have hazarded themselves, by undertaking an enterprize so perilous, in favor of a man, who had so cruelly imposed on their credulity?

But were we to grant that they formed the design of removing the body, how could they have executed it? How could soldiers, armed, and on guard, suffer themselves to be overreached by a few timorous people? "Either," says St. Augustine,* "they were asleep, or awake: If they were awake, why should they suffer the body to be taken away? If asleep, how could they know that the disciples took it away? How dare they then depose that it was stolen?" All these, however, are only presumptions.

The testimony of the apostles furnisheth us with *arguments*, and there are eight considerations, which give their evidence sufficient weight. Remark the *nature*, and the *number*, of the witnesses: The *fact* they avow, and the *agreement* of their evidence: The *tribunals*, before which they stood, and the *time*, in which they made

* Serm. ii. in Psal. xxxvi.

made their depositions: The *place*, where they affirmed the resurrection, and their *motives* for doing so.

1. Consider *the nature of these witnesses.* Had they been men of opulence and credit in the world, we might have thought, that their reputation gave a run to the fable. Had they been learned and eloquent men, we might have imagined, that the style, in which they told the tale, had soothed the souls of the people into a belief of it. But, for my part, when I consider that the apostles were the lowest of mankind, without reputation to impose on people, without authority to compel, and without riches to reward: when I consider, that they were mean, rough, unlearned men, and consequently very unequal to the task of putting a cheat upon others; I cannot conceive, that people of this character could succeed in deceiving the whole church.

2. Consider *the number of these witnesses.* St. Paul enumerates them, and tells us, that Jesus Christ *was seen of Cephas*, 1 Cor. xv. 5, &c. This appearance is related by St. Luke, who saith, *the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon*, chap. xxiv. 34. The apostle adds, *then* he was seen *of the twelve*: This is related by St Mark, who saith, *he appeared unto the eleven*, chap. xvi. 14. It was the same appearance, for the apostles retained the appellation *twelve*, although, after Judas had been guilty of suicide, they were reduced to *eleven*. St. Paul adds further, *after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once*: Jesus Christ promised this appearance to the women, "Go into Galilee, and tell my brethren, that they shall see me there," Matt. xxviii. 10. St. Luke tells us in the first chapter of Acts, that the church consisted of *about an hundred and twenty* members; this was the church at Jerusalem: but the greatest part

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of the *five hundred*, of whom St. Paul speaks, were of Galilee, where Jesus Christ had preached his gospel, and where these converts abode after his resurrection. The apostle subjoins, *after that he was seen of James;* this appearance is not related by the evangelists: but St. Paul knew it by tradition.* St. Jerom writes, that in a Hebrew gospel, attributed to St. Matthew, called *The Gospel of the Nazarenes*, it was said, *Jesus Christ appeared to St. James;* that, this apostle having made a vow neither to eat nor drink till Jesus should rise from the dead, the divine Saviour took bread and broke it, took wine and poured it out, and said to him, *Eat and drink, for the son of man is risen from the dead.*† St. Paul yet adds

* Two of our Lord's apostles were named *James*. The *elder* of the two, brother of John, was put to death by Herod, Acts xii. 2. The other, who was first cousin to Jesus Christ, was called the *less*, the *younger* probably, and lived many years after. It is not certain which of the two St. Paul means. If he mean the *first*, he had the account of the appearing of the Lord to him, probably, as Mr. Saurin says, by *tradition*: If the *last*, it is likely, he had it from James himself; for him he *saw* at Jerusalem, Gal. i. 19. and he was living in the year 57, when St. Paul wrote this first epistle to the Corinthians.

† The gospel, of which Mr. Saurin, after St. Jerom, speaks, is now lost. It was probably one of those mangled, interpolated copies of the true gospel of St. Matthew, which, through the avidity of the lower sort of people to know the history of Jesus Christ, had been transcribed, and debased, and was handed about the world. I call it *mangled*; because some parts of the *true* gospel were *omitted*. I call it *interpolated*; because *some* things were *added from other gospels*, as the history of the woman caught in adultery, from St. John: Euseb. Eccl. hist. lib. iii cap. 39. and *others from report*, as the above passage relative to James, &c. This book was written in Syriac, with Hebrew characters, St. Jerom translated it into Greek, and Latin, and divers of the fathers quote it, as Hegesippus, Euseb. E. H. lib. iv. 22. Ignatius Ep. and Smyrnenses,

adds further, "Then he was seen of all the apostles; and, last of all, of me also, as of one born out of due time." So numerous were the witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus Christ! from this fact we derive a second argument; for, had the witnesses been few, it might have been said, that the base design of deceiving the whole church was formed by one, and propagated by a few more; or that some one had fancied he saw Jesus Christ: but when St. Paul, when the rest of the apostles, when *five hundred brethren* attest the truth of the fact; what room remains for suspicion and doubt?

3. Observe *the facts themselves, which they avow*, Had they been metaphysical reasonings, depending on a chain of principles and consequences; had they been periods of chronology, depending on long and difficult calculations; had they been distant events, which could only have been known by the relations of others; their reasonings might have been suspected: But they are facts, which are in question, facts, which, the witnesses declared, they had seen with their own eyes at divers places, and at several times. Had they seen Jesus Christ? Had they touched him? Had they sitten at table, and eaten with him? Had they conversed with him? All these are questions of fact: it was impossible they could be deceived in them.

4. Remark *the agreement of their evidence*. They all unanimously deposed, that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. It is very extraordinary, that a gang of five hundred impostors, (I speak the language of infidels) a company, in which

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Edit. Usserii, p. 112. Clement of Alexandria, Stromat. lib. ii. p. 278, Edit. Lugdun. 1616. Origen, St. Jerom, &c. It went by the names of the gospel according to St. Matthew, the gospel according to the Hebrews, the gospel of the *twelve apostles*, the gospel of the Nazarenes. See Luke i. 1, 2.

there must needs be people of different capacities and tempers, the witty and the dull, the timid and the bold; it is very strange, that such a numerous body as this should maintain an unity of evidence. This, however, is the case of our witnesses. What christian ever contradicted himself? What christian ever impeached his accomplices? What christian ever discovered this pretended imposture?

5. Observe *the tribunals, before which they gave evidence*, and the innumerable multitude of people by whom their testimony was examined, by Jews and Heathens, by philosophers and Rabbies, and by an infinite number of people, who went annually to Jerusalem: For, my brethren, Providence so ordered these circumstances, that the testimony of the apostles might be unsuspected. Providence continued Jerusalem forty years after the resurrection of our Lord, that all the Jews in the world might examine the evidence concerning it, and obtain authentic proof of the truth of christianity. I repeat it again, then, the apostles maintained the resurrection of Jesus Christ before Jews, before Pagans, before philosophers, before Rabbies, before courtiers, before lawyers, before people expert in examining, and in cross-examining witnesses, in order to lead them into self-contradiction. Had the apostles borne their testimony in consequence of a preconcerted plot between themselves, is it not morally certain, that, as they were examined before such different and capable men, some one would have discovered the pretended fraud?

6. Consider *the place, in which the apostles bore their testimony*. Had they published the resurrection of the Saviour of the world in distant countries, beyond mountains and seas, it might have been supposed, that distance of place, rendering it extremely difficult for their hearers to obtain exact information, had facilitated the establishment

tabliſhment of the error: But the apoſtles preached in Jeruſalem, in the ſynagogues, in the pretorium; they unfolded and diſplayed the banners of their maſter's croſs, and ſet up tokens of his victory, on the very ſpot, on which the infamous inſtrument of his ſufferings had been ſet up.

7. Obſerve *the time of this testimony.* Had the apoſtles firſt publiſhed this reſurrection ſeveral years after the epocha, which they aſſigned for it; unbelief might have availed itſelf of the delay: but three days after the death of Jeſus Chriſt, they ſaid, he was riſen again, and they re-echoed their teſtimony in a ſingular manner at Pentecoſt, when Jeruſalem expected the ſpread of the report, and endeavored to prevent it; while the eyes of their enemies were yet ſparkling with rage and madneſs; and while Calvary was yet dyed with the blood they had ſpilt there. Do impoſtors take ſuch meaſures? Would not they have waited till the fury of the Jews had been appeaſed, till judges, and public officers, had been changed, and till people had been leſs attentive to their depoſitions!

8. Conſider, laſtly, *the motives, which induced the apostles to publish the resurrection of Jesus Christ.* Survey the face of the world, examine all the impoſtures, that are practiſed in ſociety. Falſehood, impoſition, treachery, perjury, abound in ſociety. To every different trade and profeſſion ſome peculiar deceptions belong. However, all mankind have one deſign in deceiving, they all deceive for their own intereſt. Their intereſts are infinitely diverſified; but it is intereſt, however, that always animates all deceivers. There is one intereſt of pride, another of pleaſure, a third of profit. In the caſe before us the nature of things is ſubverted, and all our notions of the human heart contradicted. It muſt be pre-ſuppoſed, that, whereas other men gener-

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ally sacrifice the interest of their salvation to their temporal interest, the apostles, on the contrary, sacrificed their temporal interest without any inducement from the interest of salvation itself. Suppose, they had been craftily led, during the life of Jesus Christ, into the expectation of some temporal advantages, how came it to pass, that, after they saw their hopes blasted, and themselves threatened with the most rigorous punishments, they did not redeem their lives by confessing the imposture? In general, the more wicked a traitor is, the more he trembles, alters, and confesses, at the approach of death. Having betrayed, for his own interest, the laws of his country, the interests of society, the confidence of his prince, and the credit of religion, he betrays the companions of his imposture, the accomplices of his crimes. Here, on the contrary, the apostles persist in their testimony till death, and sign the truths they have published with the last drops of their blood. These are our arguments.

We proceed now to our *demonstrations*, that is, to the miracles, with which the apostles sealed the truth of their testimony. Imagine these venerable men addressing their adversaries on the day of the christian pentecost in this language. "You refuse to believe us on our depositions; five hundred of us, you think, are enthusiasts, all infected with the same malady, who have carried our absurdity so far as to imagine that we have seen a man, whom we have not seen; eaten with a man, with whom we have not eaten; conversed with a man, with whom we have not conversed: or perhaps you think us impostors, or take us for mad men, who intend to suffer ourselves to be imprisoned, and tortured, and crucified, for the sake of enjoying the pleasure of deceiving mankind, by prevailing upon them to believe a fanciful resurrection: you think we are so stupid as to act a part so extravagant. But

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bring out your sick; present your demoniacs; fetch hither your dead. Confront us with Medes, Parthians, and Elamites; let Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Egypt, Phrygia, Pamphylia, let all nations and people send us some of their inhabitants, we will restore hearing to the deaf, and sight to the blind, we will make the lame walk, we will cast out devils, and raise the dead. We, we publicans, we illiterate men, we tent makers, we fishermen, we will discourse with all the people of the world in their own languages. We will explain prophecies, elucidate the most obscure predictions, develope the most sublime mysteries, teach you notions of God, precepts for the conduct of life, plans of morality and religion, more extensive, more sublime, and more advantageous, than those of your priests and philosophers, yea than those of Moses himself. We will do more still. We will communicate these gifts to you, *the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, the gifts of healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues,* 1 Cor. xii. 8, &c. all these shall be communicated to you by your ministry."

All these things the apostles professed; all these proofs they gave of the resurrection of Jesus Christ; "this Jesus hath God raised up; and he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear," Acts ii. 32, 33. This consideration furnisheth us with an answer to the greatest objection, that was ever made to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and, in general, to his whole economy. "How is it," say unbelievers sometimes, "that your Jesus exposed all the circumstances of his abasement to the public eye, and concealed those of his elevation? If he were transfigured on the mount, it was only before Peter, James, and John. If he ascended to heaven, none but his disciples saw his ascent. If he rose again from

the dead, and appeared, he appeared only to thoſe, who were intereſted in his fame. Why did he not ſhew himſelf to the ſynagogue? Why did he not appear to Pilate? Why did he not ſhew himſelf alive in the ſtreets, and public aſſemblies, of Jeruſalem? Had he done ſo, infidelity would have been eradicated, and every one would have believed his own eyes: but the ſecrecy of all theſe events expoſeth them to very juſt ſuſpicions, and giveth plauſible pretexts to errors, if errors they be."

We omit many ſolid anſwers to this objection; perhaps we may urge them on future occaſions, and at preſent we content ourſelves with obſerving, that the apoſtles, who atteſted the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, wrought miracles in the preſence of all thoſe, before whom, you ſay, Jeſus Chriſt ought to have produced himſelf after his reſurrection. The apoſtles wrought miracles; behold Jeſus Chriſt! ſee his Spirit! behold his reſurrection! "God hath raiſed up Jeſus Chriſt, and he hath ſhed forth what ye now ſee and hear." This way of proving the reſurrection of Chriſt was as convincing as the ſhewing of himſelf to each of his enemies would have been; as the expoſure of his wounds before them, or the permitting of them to thruſt their hands into his ſide, would have been. Yea, this was a more convincing way, than that would have been, for which you plead. Had Jeſus Chriſt ſhewn himſelf, they might have thought him a phantom, or a counterfeit; they might have ſuppoſed, that a reſemblance of features had occaſioned an illuſion: but what could an unbeliever oppoſe againſt the healing of the ſick, the raiſing of the dead, the expulſion of devils, the alteration and ſubverſion of all nature?

It may be ſaid, perhaps, all theſe proofs, if indeed they ever exiſted, were concluſive to them, who, it is pretended, ſaw the miracles of the apoſtles;

apoſtles; but they can have no weight with us, who live ſeventeen centuries after them. We reply, The miracles of the apoſtles cannot be doubted without giving into an univerſal ſcepticiſm; without eſtabliſhing this unwarrantable principle, that we ought to believe nothing but what we ſee; and without taxing three ſorts of people, equally unſuſpected, with extravagance on this occaſion.

1. They, who call themſelves *the operators of these miracles*, would be chargeable with extravagance. If they wrought none, they were impoſtors, who endeavored to deceive mankind. If they were impoſtors of the leaſt degree of common ſenſe, they would have uſed ſome precautions to conceal their impoſture. But ſee how they relate the facts, of the truth of which we pretend no doubt. They ſpecify times, places, and circumſtances. They ſay, ſuch and ſuch facts paſſed in ſuch cities, ſuch public places, ſuch aſſemblies, in ſight of ſuch and ſuch people. Thus St. Paul writes to the Corinthians. He directs to a ſociety of chriſtians in the city of Corinth. He tells them, that they had received miraculous gifts, and cenſures them for making a parade of them. He reproves them for ſtriving to diſplay, each his own gifts in their public aſſemblies. He gives them ſome rules for the regulation of their conduct in this caſe. "If any man ſpeak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the moſt by three, and that by courſe, and let one interpret. If there be no interpreter, let him keep ſilence in the church. Let the prophets ſpeak, two, or three. If any thing be revealed to another that ſitteth by, let the firſt hold his peace," 1 Cor. xiv. 27, 28, &c. I aſk, with what face could St. Paul have written in this manner to the Corinthians, if all theſe facts had been falſe? If the Corinthians had received neither *the gifts of prophecy*, nor *the discerning*

discerning of spirits, nor *divers kinds of tongues*. What a front had he, who wrote in this manner?

2. *The enemies of Christianity* muſt be taxed with extravagance. Since chriſtians gloried in the ſhining miracles, that their preachers wrought; and ſince their preachers gloried in performing them before whole aſſemblies, it would have been very eaſy to diſcover their impoſture, had they been impoſtors. Suppoſe a modern impoſtor, preaching a new religion, and pretending to the glory of confirming it by notable miracles, wrought in this place: What method ſhould we take to refute him? Should we affirm that miracles do not prove the truth of a doctrine? Should we have recourſe to miracles wrought by others? Should we not exclaim againſt the fraud? Should we not appeal to our own eyes? Should we want any thing more than the diſſembler's own profeſſions to convict him of impoſture? Why did not the avowed enemies of chriſtianity, who endeavored by their publications to refute it, take theſe methods? How was it, that Celſus, Porphyry, Zoſimus, Julian the apoſtate, and Hierocles, the greateſt antagoniſts, that chriſtianity ever had, and whoſe writings are in our hands, never denied the facts: but, allowing the principle, turned all the points of their arguments againſt the conſequences, that chriſtians inferred from them? By ſuppoſing the falſehood of the miracles of the apoſtles, do we not tax the enemies of chriſtianity with abſurdity?

In fine, This ſuppoſition chargeth *the whole multitude of chriſtians, who embraced the goſpel*, with extravagance. The examination of the truth of religion, now, depends on a chain of principles and conſequences, which require a profound attention: and, therefore, the number of thoſe, who profeſs ſuch or ſuch a religion, cannot

not demonstrate the truth of their religion. But in the days of the apostles the whole depended on a few plain facts. Hath Jesus Christ communicated his Spirit to his apostles? Do the apostles work miracles? Have they the power of imparting miraculous gifts to those, who embrace their doctrine? And yet this religion, the discussion of which was so plain and easy, spread itself far and wide. If the apostles did not work miracles, one of these two suppositions must be made: either these proselytes did not deign to open their eyes, but sacrificed their prejudices, passions, educations, ease, fortunes, lives, and consciences, without condescending to spend one moment on the examination of this question: Do the apostles work miracles? or that, on supposition they did open their eyes, and did find the falsehood of these pretended miracles, they yet sacrificed their prejudices, and their passions, their educations, their ease, and their honor, their properties, their consciences, and their lives, to a religion, which wholly turned on this false principle, that its miracles were true.

Collect all these proofs together, my brethren, consider them in one point of view, and see how many extravagant suppositions must be advanced, if the resurrection of our Saviour be denied. It must be supposed, that guards, who had been particularly cautioned by their officers, sat down to sleep, and that, however they deserved credit when they said the body of Jesus Christ was stolen: it must be supposed, that men who had been imposed on in the most odious and cruel manner in the world, hazarded their dearest enjoyments for the glory of an impostor. It must be supposed, that ignorant and illiterate men, who had neither reputation, fortune, nor eloquence, possessed the art of fascinating the eyes of all the church. It must be supposed, either that five hundred persons were all deprived of their senses at a time;

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or that they were all deceived in the plaineſt matters of fact; or that this multitude of falſe witneſſes had found out the ſecret of never contradicting themſelves, or one another, and of being always uniform in their teſtimony. It muſt be ſuppoſed, that the moſt expert courts of judicature could not find out a ſhadow of contradiction in a palpable impoſture. It muſt be ſuppoſed, that the apoſtles, ſenſible men in other caſes, choſe preciſely thoſe places, and thoſe times which were the moſt unfavorable to their views. It muſt be ſuppoſed, that millions madly ſuffered impriſonments, tortures, and crucifixions, to ſpread an illuſion. It muſt be ſuppoſed, that ten thouſand miracles were wrought in favor of falſehood: or all theſe facts muſt be denied, and then it muſt be ſuppoſed, that the apoſtles were idiots, that the enemies of chriſtianity were idiots, and that all the primitive chriſtians were idiots.

The arguments that perſuade us of the truth of the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, are ſo clear and ſo concluſive, that if any difficulty remain, it ariſeth from the brightneſs of the evidence itſelf. Yes, I declare, if any thing has ſhaken my confidence in it, it hath ariſen from this conſideration. I could not conceive how a truth, atteſted by ſo many irreproachable witneſſes, and confirmed by ſo many notorious miracles, ſhould not make more proſelytes; how it could poſſibly be, that all the Jews, and all the heathens, did not yield to this evidence. But this difficulty ought not to weaken our faith. In the folly of mankind its ſolution lies. Men are capable of any thing to gratify their paſſions, and to defend their prejudices. The unbelief of the Jews and heathens is not more wonderful than a hundred other phenomena, which, were we not to behold them every day, would equally alarm us. It is not more ſurpriſing than the ſuperſtitious veneration, in which, for many ages, the chriſtian

tian world held that dark, confused, pagan genius, Aristotle; a veneration, which was carried so far, that when metaphysical questions were disputed in the schools, questions on which every one ought always to have liberty to speak his opinion; when they were examining whether there were a void in nature, whether nature abhorred a vacuum, whether matter were divisible, whether there were atoms, properly so called; when it could be proved, in disputes of this kind, that Aristotle was of such or such an opinion, his infallibility was allowed, and the dispute was at end. The unbelief of the ancients is not more surprising than the credulity of the moderns: We see kings, and princes, and a great part of christendom, submit to a pope, yea to an inferior priest, often to one who is void of both sense and grace. It is not more astonishing than the implicit faith of christians, who believe, in an enlightened age, in the days of Descartes, Paschal, and Malbranche; what am I saying? Descartes, Paschal, and Malbranche themselves believe, that a piece of bread, which they reduce to a pulp with their teeth, which they taste, swallow, and digest, is the body of their Redeemer. The ancient unbelief is not more wonderful than yours, protestants! You profess to believe there is a judgment, and a hell, and to know that misers, adulterers, and drunkards, must suffer everlasting punishments there, and although you cannot be ignorant of your being in this fatal list, yet you are as easy about futurity, as if you had read your names in the book of life, and had no reason to entertain the least doubt of your salvation.

II. We have urged the arguments, that prove the resurrection of Jesus Christ: I shall detain you only a few moments longer in justifying the joyful acclamations which it produced, "The voice of rejoicing and salvation, is in the tabernacles

nacles of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly. The right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly."

The three melancholy days that passed between the death of Jesus Christ and his resurrection, were days of triumph for the enemies of the church. Jesus Christ riseth again; and the church triumphs in its turn: "The voice of rejoicing and salvation, is in the tabernacles of the righteous. The right hand of the Lord doth valiantly."

1. In those melancholy days, *heresy triumphed over truth.* The greatest objection that was made against the satisfaction of Jesus Christ, was taken from his innocence, which is the foundation of it. For if Jesus Christ were innocent, where was divine justice when he was overwhelmed with sufferings, and put to death? Where was it, when he was expoſed to the unbridled rage of the populace? This difficulty seems at first indissoluble. Yea, rather let all the guilty perish; rather let all the posterity of Adam be plunged into hell; rather let divine justice destroy every creature that divine goodness hath made, than leave so many virtues, so much benevolence, and so much fervour, humility so profound, and zeal so great, without indemnity and reward. But when we see that Jesus Christ, by suffering death, disarmed it, by lying in the tomb took away its sting, by his crucifixion ascended to a throne, the difficulty is diminished, yea, it vanisheth away: "The voice of rejoicing and salvation, is in the tabernacles of the righteous. The right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly." God and man are reconciled; divine justice is satisfied; henceforth we may go "boldly to the throne of grace. There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. Who shall lay any thing

thing to the charge of God's elect? Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again," Heb. iv. 16. Rom. viii. 1, 32, 34.

2. In those mournful days *infidelity triumphed over faith.* At the sight of a deceased Jesus the infidel displayed his system by insulting him, who sacrificed his passions to his duty, and by saying, See, see, that pale motionless carcase: *Bless God and die!** *All events come alike to all, there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the clean and to the unclean; to him*

R *that*

* So the French bibles render the words, BLESS *God and die!* our translation hath it, CURSE *God and die.* Job, who best knew his wife, calls this a *foolish* saying; that is, a saying void of *humanity* and *religion:* for so the word foolish signifies in scripture. It was a cruel popular sarcasm, frequently cast by sceptics on those who persisted in the belief of a God, and of the perfection and excellence of his providence, even while he suffered them to sink under the most terrible calamities. "Your God is the God of universal nature! He regards the actions of men! He rewards virtue! He punishes vice! On these erroneous principles your adoration of him has been built. This was a pardonable folly in the time of your prosperity; but what an absurdity to persist in it now! If your present sufferings do not undeceive you, no future means can. Your mind is past information. Persevere! *Go on in your adoration till you die.*"

It may seem strange at first, that the same term should stand for two such opposite ideas as *blessing* and *cursing:* but a very plain and natural reason may be assigned for it. The Hebrew word originally signified *to bless,* (*benedicere*): and when applied to *God,* it meant *to bless,* that is, *to praise* God by *worshipping* him. The Talmudists say, that the religious honors which were paid to God, were of four sorts. The prostration of the whole body was one: The bowing of the head another: The bending of the upper part of the body towards the knees a third; and *genuflexion* the fourth. Megillæ fol. 22. 2. apud Buxtorff. Lex. In these ways was God *praised, worshipped,* or *blessed,* and the Hebrew word for blessing was naturally put

that sacrificeth and to him that sacrificeth not; as is the good, so is the sinner, and he that sweareth as he that feareth an oath, Eccles. ix. 2.

Jesus

for *genuflexion*, the *expression* of bleſſing, or praiſing: thus it is rendered Pſalm xcv. 6. let us *kneel* before the Lord: 2 Chron. vi. 13. Solomon *kneeled* down upon his knees. The bending of the knee being a uſual *token of reſpect*, which people paid *to one another*, when they met, the word was transferred to this alſo, and is properly *ſalute*: 2 Kings iv. 19. If thou meet any man *ſalute* him not. The ſame token of reſpect being parting, the word was alſo applied to that: They *bleſſed* Rebekah, that is, *they bade her farewell*, accompanying their good wiſhes with *genuflexion*. From this known meaning of the word, it was applied to a bending of the knee where no bleſſing could be intended; he made his camels *kneel down*, Gen. xxiv. 11. It was put ſometimes for the reſpect, that was paid to a magiſtrate, Gen. xli. 43. and ſometimes for the reſpect, which idolaters paid to falſe gods. But to *bow the knee* to an idol was to *deny the exiſtence of God*, to renounce his *worſhip*, or, in the ſcripture ſtyle, to *curſe* God, to *blaſpheme* God, &c. *If I beheld the ſun, or the moon, and my mouth hath kiſſed my hand, I ſhould have denied the God, that is above*, Job xxxi. 26, 27, 28. Only the ſcope of the place, therefore, can determine the preciſe meaning of the word. The word muſt be rendered *curſe*, *deny*, God, or *renounce his worſhip*, Job i. 5, 11. and it muſt be rendered *bleſs*, *acknowledge*, or *worſhip* him, in ver. 21. The Septuagint, after a long ſarcaſtic paraphraſe, ſuppoſed to have been ſpoken by Job's wife, renders the phraſe *eipon ti rema pros Kurion kai teleuta*. To bring our meaning into a narrow compaſs. If an ancient Jew had ſeen a *dumb* man bend his knee in the *tabernacle*, or in the *temple*, he would have ſaid he *bleſſed the* LORD. Had he ſeen him, bend his knee at *court*, in the preſence of Solomon, he would have ſaid he *bleſſed*, that is, he *ſaluted the* KING. And had he ſeen him bend his knee in a *houſe of Baal*, or in an *idolatrous grove*, he would have ſaid, he *bleſſed an* IDOL; or, as the embracing of idolatry was the renouncing of the worſhip of the true God, he would have ſaid, he *curſed* JEHOVAH. We have ventured this conjecture to prevent any prejudices againſt the Engliſh bible, that may ariſe from the ſeemingly uncertain meaning of ſome Hebrew words.

Jesus Christ riseth from the dead: "The voice of rejoicing and salvation, is in the tabernacles of the righteous." The system of the infidel sinks: "he errs, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God," Matt. xxii. 29.

3. In those dismal days, *tyranny triumphed over the perseverance of martyrs.* Innocence was oppressed, and the rewards of virtue seemed to be buried in the tomb of him, who, above all others, had devoted himself to it. Jesus Christ riseth again: "The voice of rejoicing and salvation, is in the tabernacles of the righteous." The designs of the enemies of innocence are all frustrated, and their attempts to disgrace purity serve only to exalt its glory, and to perpetuate its memory. Let the tyrants of the church, then, rage against us; let *the gates of hell*, Matt. xvi. 18. consult to destroy us; let the kings *of the earth*, more furious oftener than hell itself, *set themselves against the Lord and against his anointed*, Psal. ii. 2. let them set up gibbets, let them equip galleys, let them kindle fires to burn us, and prepare racks to torture us; they themselves, and all their cruel inventions, shall serve the purposes of the almighty God: The *Assyrian is* only *the rod of his anger*, Isa. x. 5. "Herod and Pilate do *only* what his hand and his counsel determined before to be done," Acts iv. 28. God knoweth how to restrain their fury, and to say to them, as he saith to the ocean, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed," Job xxxviii. 2.

4. Finally, in those fatal days, *death triumphed over all human hope of immortal glory.* The destiny of all believers is united to that of Jesus Christ. He had said to his disciples, *because I live, ye shall live also*, John xiv. 19. In like manner, on the same principle, we may say, If he be dead, we are dead also. And how could we

we have hoped to live, if he who is our life, had not freed himself from the ſtate of the dead? Jeſus Chriſt riſeth from the dead. "The voice of rejoicing is in the tabernacles of the righteous." Nature is re-inſtated in its primæval dignity; *death is swallowed up in victory*, 1 Cor. xv. 54. the grave is diſarmed of its ſting. Let my eye-ſight decay; let my body bow under the weight of old age; let the organs of my body ceaſe to perform their wonted operations; let all my ſenſes fail; let death ſweep away the dear relatives *of* my *bosom*, and my *friends*, *who are as mine own soul*, Deut. xiii. 6. let theſe eyes, guſhing with tears, attended with ſobs, and ſorrows, and groans, behold her expire, who was my company in ſolitude, my counſel in difficulty, my comfort in diſgrace; let me follow to the grave the bones, the carcaſe, the precious remains of this dear part of myſelf; my converſe is ſuſpended, but is not deſtroyed; "Lazarus, my friend, ſleepeth, but if I believe, I ſhall ſee the glory of God." Jeſus Chriſt is *the resurrection and the life*, John xi. 2, 40, 25. He is riſen from the dead, we therefore ſhall one day riſe. Jeſus Chriſt is not a private perſon, he is a public repreſentative, he is the ſurety of the church; "the firſt fruits of them that ſleep. If the ſpirit of him that raiſed up Jeſus from the dead, dwell in you; he that raiſed up Chriſt from the dead, ſhall alſo quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you," 1 Cor. xv. 20. Rom. viii. 2.

Was ever joy more rational? Was triumph ever more glorious? The triumphant entries of conquerors, the ſongs that rend the air in praiſe of their victories, the pyramids on which their exploits are tranſmitted to poſterity, when they have ſubdued a general, routed an army, humbled the pride, and repreſſed the rage of a foe; ought not all theſe to yield to the joys that are occaſioned

occasioned by the event which we celebrate to day? Ought not all these to yield to the victories of our incomparable Lord, and to his people's expressions of praise? One part of the gratitude, which is due to beneficial events, is to know their value, and to be affected with the benefits which they procure.

Let us celebrate the praise of the author of our redemption, my brethren; let us call heaven and earth to witness our gratitude. Let an increase of zeal accompany this part of our engagements. Let a double portion of fire from heaven kindle our sacrifice; and with a heart penetrated with the liveliest gratitude, and with the most ardent love, let each christian exclaim, "Blessed be the God, and Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten me again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," 1 Pet. i. 3. Let him join his voice to that of angels, and, in concert with the celestial intelligences, let him sing, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory," Isa. vi. 3. Let *the tabernacles of the righteous* resound with the text, *the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly: the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly.*

But what melancholy thoughts are these, which interrupt the pleasures of this day? Whose *tabernacles* are these? The tabernacles of *the righteous?* Ah! my brethren! wo be to you, if, under pretence that *the righteous* ought to rejoice to-day, you rejoice by adding sin to sin! The resurrection of the Saviour of the world, perfectly afforts with the other parts of his economy. It is a spring flowing with motives of holiness. God has left nothing undone in the work of your salvation. The great work is finished. Jesus Christ completed it, when he rose from the tomb. The Son hath paid the ran-

ſom. The Father hath accepted it. The holy Spirit hath publiſhed it, and by innumerable prodigies hath confirmed it. None but yourſelves can condemn you. Nothing can deprive you of this grace, but your own contempt of it.

But the more precious this grace is, the more criminal, and the more affronting to God, will your contempt of it be. The more joy, with which the glory of a riſen Jeſus ought to inſpire you, if you believe in him, the more terror ought you to feel, if you attempt to diſobey him. He, who "declared him the ſon of God, with power by the reſurrection from the dead, *put* a ſceptre of iron into his hand, that he might break his enemies, and daſh them in pieces like a potter's veſſel," Rom. i. 4. Pſal. ii. 9. Doſt thou enter into theſe reflections? Doſt thou approach the table of Jeſus Chriſt with determinations to live a new life? I believe ſo. But the grand fault of our communions, and ſolemn feſtivals, doth not lie in the preciſe time of our communions and ſolemnities. The repreſentation of Jeſus Chriſt in the Lord's ſupper; certain reflections that move conſcience; an extraordinary attention to the nobleſt object in religion; the ſolemnities that belong to our public feſtivals; inſpire us with a kind of devotion: but how often does this devotion vaniſh with the objects that produced it? Theſe auguſt ſymbols ſhould follow thee into thy warfare in the world. A voice ſhould ſound in thine ears amidſt the tumult of the world; amidſt the diſſipating ſcenes that beſiege thy mind; amidſt the pleaſures that faſcinate thine eyes; amidſt the grandeur and glory which thou cauſeſt to blaze around thee, and with which thou thyſelf, although, alas! always mortal, always a worm of the earth, always duſt and aſhes, art the firſt to be dazzled; a voice ſhould ſound in thine ears, Remember thy vows, remember thine oaths, remember thy joys.

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My brethren, if you be not to-morrow, and till the next Lord's supper-day, what you are to-day, we recall all the congratulations, all the benedictions, and all the declarations of joy, which we have addreſſed to you. Inſtead of congratulating you on your happineſs in being permitted to approach God in your devotions, we will deplore your wickedneſs in adding perfidy and perjury to all your other crimes. Inſtead of benedictions and vows, we will cry, "Anathema, Maranatha; if any man love not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be Anathema," 1 Cor. xvi. 22. If any man who hath kiſſed the Saviour betray him, *let him be Anathema.* If any man defile the myſteries of our holy religion, *let him be Anathema.* If any man "tread under foot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, let him be Anathema," Heb. x. 29. Inſtead of inviting thee to celebrate the *praise* of the author of our being, we forbid thee the practice, for it *is comely* only *for the upright*, Pſal. xxxiii. 1. *God*, by our miniſtry, *ſaith* to thee, Thou *wicked man! What haſt thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth?* Pſal. l. 16. Why doth that mouth now bleſs my name, and then blaſpheme it: now praiſe me thy Creator, and then defame my creatures: now publiſh my goſpel, and then profane it?

If, on the contrary, you live agreeably to the engagements into which you have entered to-day; what a day, what a day, my brethren, is this day? A day in which you have performed the great work, for which God formed you, and which is all that deſerves the attention of an immortal ſoul. A day in which many impurities, many calumnies, many paſſionate actions, many perjuries, and many oaths have been buried in everlaſting ſilence. It is a day, in which you have been waſhed in the blood of the Lamb; in which you have entered into fellowſhip with God;

God; in which you have heard these triumphant shouts in the church, *Grace, grace unto it*, Zech. iv. 7. A day in which you have been *raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*, Eph. ii. 6. A day, the pleasing remembrance of which will follow you to your death-bed, and will enable your pastors to open the gates of heaven to you, to commit your souls into the hands of the Redeemer who ransomed it, and say to you, Remember, on such a day your sins were effaced; remember, on such a day Jesus Christ disarmed death; remember, on such a day the gate of heaven was opened to you.

O day! which the Lord hath made, let me for ever rejoice in thy light! O day of designs, resolutions, and promises, may I never forget thee! O day of consolation and grace, may a rich effusion of the peace of God on this auditory, preserve thy memorial through a thousand generations!

Receive this peace, my dear brethren. I spread over you hands washed in the innocent blood of my Redeemer; and as our risen Lord Jesus Christ, when he appeared to his disciples, said to them, *Peace, peace be unto you*; so we, by his command, while we celebrate the memorable history of his resurrection, say to you, "Peace, peace be unto you. As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God," John xx. 19, 21. Gal. vi. 16. To him be honor and glory for ever.—Amen.

SERMON

SERMON VIII.

THE ABSURDITY OF LIBERTINISM AND INFIDELITY.

PSALM, xciv. 7, 8, 9, 10.

They say, The Lord shall not see: neither shall the God of Jacob regard it. Understand, ye most brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise? He, that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He, that formed the eye, shall he not see? He, that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? He, that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?

INVECTIVE and reproach seldom proceed from the mouth of a man, who loves truth and defends it. They are the usual weapons of them, who plead a desperate cause; who feel themselves hurt by a formidable adversary; who have not the equity to yield, when they ought to yield; and who have no other part to take, than that of supplying the want of solid reasons by odious names.

Yet, whatever charity we may have for erroneous people, it is difficult to see, with moderation, men obstinately maintaining some errors, guiding their minds by the corruption of their hearts, and choosing rather to advance the most palpable absurdities, than to give the least check to the most irregular passions. Hear how the sacred authors treat people of this character. "My people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, they have no understanding. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ephraim is

like

like a silly dove without heart. O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you," Jer. iv. 22. Isa. i. 3. Hos. vii. 11. Matt. iii. 7. and Gal. iii. 1.

Not to multiply examples, let it suffice to remark, that, if ever there were men, who deserved such odious names, they are such as our prophet describes. Those abominable men I mean, who, in order to violate the laws of religion without remorse, maintain, that religion is a chimera; who break down all the bounds, which God hath set to the wickedness of mankind, and who determine to be obstinate infidels, that they may be peaceable libertines. The prophet, therefore, lays aside, in respect to them, that charity, which a weak mind would merit, that errs only through the misfortune of a bad education, or the strait limits of a narrow capacity. "O ye most brutish among the people," says he to them, "understand. Ye fools, when will ye be wise?"

People of this sort, I intend to attack to-day. Not that I promise myself much success with them, or entertain hopes of reclaiming them. These are the *fools*, of whom Solomon says, "though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him," Prov. xxvii. 22. But I am endeavoring to prevent the progress of the evil, and to guard our youth against favorable impressions of infidelity and libertinism, which have already decoyed away too many of our young people, and to confirm you all in your attachment to your holy religion. Let us enter into the matter.

In the style of the sacred authors, particularly in that of our prophet, to deny the existence of a God, the doctrine of Providence, and the essential difference between just and unjust, is one and the

the same thing. Compare the psalm, out of which I have taken my text, with the fourteenth, with the fifty-third, and particularly with the tenth, and you will perceive, that the prophet confounds them, who say *in their hearts, there is no God*, with those, who say, *God hath forgotten; he hideth his face, he will never see it*, Psal. x. 11.

In effect, although the last of these doctrines may be maintained without admitting the first, yet the last is no less essential to religion than the first. And although a man may be a deist, and an epicurean, without being an atheist, yet the system of an atheist is no more odious to God than that of an epicurean, and that of a deist.

I shall, therefore, make but one man of these different men, and, after the example of the prophet, I shall attack him with the same arms. In order to justify the titles, that he gives an infidel, I shall attack,

I. His taste.

II. His policy.

III. His indocility.

IV. His logics, or to speak more properly, his way of reasoning.

V. His morality.

VI. His conscience.

VII. His politeness, and knowledge of the world.

In all these reflections, which I shall proportion to the length of these exercises, I shall pay more regard to the genius of our age than to that of the times of the prophet: and I shall do this the rather, because we cannot determine on what occasion the psalm was composed, of which the text is a part.

I. If you consider the *taste*, the discernment and choice of the people, of whom the prophet speaks, you will see, he had a great right to denominate them *most brutish* and *foolish*. What

an excefs muft a man have attained, when he hates a religion, without which he cannot but be miferable! Who, of the happieft of mankind, doth not want the fuccour of religion? What difgraces at court! What mortifications in the army! What accidents in trade! What uncertainty in fcience! What bitternefs in pleafure! What injuries in reputation! What inconftancy in riches! What difappointments in projects! What infidelity in friendfhip! What viciffitudes in fortune! Miferable man! What will fupport thee under fo many calamities? What miferable comforters are the paffions in thefe fad periods of life! How inadequate is philofophy itfelf, how improper is Zeno, how unequal are all his followers to the task of calming a poor mortal, when they tell him, "Misfortunes are infeparable from human nature. No man fhould think himfelf exempt from any thing, that belongs to the condition of mankind. If maladies be violent, they will be fhort; if they be long, they will be tolerable. A fatal neceffity prevails over all mankind; complaints and regrets cannot change the order of things. A generous foul fhould be fuperior to all events, it fhould defpife a tyrant, defy fortune, and render itfelf infenfible to pain." Tolerable reflections in a book, plaufible arguments in a public auditory! But weak reflections, vain arguments, in a bed of infirmity, while a man is fuffering the pain of the gout, or the ftone!

O! how neceffary is religion to us in thefe fatal circumftances! It fpeaketh to us in a manner infinitely more proper to comfort us under our heavieft afflictions! Religion faith to you, "Out of the mouth of the Moft High proceedeth evil and good," Lam. iii. 38. "He formeth light and createth darknefs; he maketh peace, and createth evil," Ifa. xlv. 7. "Shall

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there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?" Amos iii. 6. Religion tells you, that if God afflict you, it is for your own advantage; it is, that, being uneasy on earth, you may take your flight toward heaven; that "your light affliction, which is but for a moment, may work for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," 2 Cor. iv. 17. Religion bids you "not to think it strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you," 1 Pet. iv. 12. but to believe, that "the trial of your faith, being much more precious than that of gold, which perisheth, will be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ," chap. i. 7.

But religion is above all necessary in the grand vicissitude, in the fatal point, to which all the steps of life tend, I mean, at the hour of death. For, at length, after we have rushed into all pleasures, after we have sung well, danced well, feasted well, we must die, we must die. And what, pray, except religion, can support a man, struggling with *the king of terrors*? Job xviii. 14. A man, who sees his grandeur abased, his fortune distributed, his connections dissolved, his senses benumbed, his grave dug, the world retiring from him, his bones hanging on the verge of the grave, and his soul divided between the horrible hope of sinking into nothing, and the dreadful fear of falling into the hands of an angry God.

In sight of these formidable objects, fall, fall, ye bandages of infidelity! ye vails of obscurity and depravity! and let me perceive how necessary religion is to man. It is that, which sweetens the bitterest of all bitters. It is that, which disarms the most invincible monster. It is that, which transformeth the most frightful of all objects, into an object of gratitude and joy. It is that, which calms the conscience, and confirms

the soul. It is that, which presents to the dying believer another being, another life, another economy, other objects, and other hopes. It is that, which, "while the outward man perisheth, reneweth the inward man day by day," 2 Cor. iv. 16. It is that, which dissipates the horrors of *the valley of the shadow of death*, Psal. xxiii. 4. It is that, which cleaves the clouds in the sight of a departing Stephen; tells a converted thief, *to-day shalt thou be in paradise*, Luke xxiii. 43. and cries to all true penitents, *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord*, Rev. xiv. 13.

II. Having taken the unbelieving libertine on his own interest, I take him on the public interest, and, having attacked his taste, and discernment, I attack his *policy*. An infidel is a disturber of public peace, who, by undertaking to sap the foundations of religion, undermines those of society. *Society cannot subsist without religion.* If plausible objections may be formed against this proposition, it is because opponents have had the art of disguising it. To explain it, is to preclude the sophisms, which are objected against it. Permit us to lay down a few explanatory principles.

First. When we say, *Society cannot subsist without religion*, we do not comprehend in our proposition all the religions in the world. The proposition includes only those religions, which retain the fundamental principles, that constitute the base of virtue; as the immortality of the soul, a future judgment, a particular Providence. We readily grant, there may be in the world a religion worse than atheism: for example, any religion, that should command its votaries to kill, to assassinate, to betray. And, as we readily grant this truth to those, who take the pains to maintain it, so whatever they oppose to us, taken from the religions of pagans, which were

hurtful

hurtful to ſociety, is only vain declamation, that proves nothing againſt us.

Secondly. When we affirm, *Society cannot subsist without religion*, we do not pretend, that religion, which retains articles ſafe to ſociety, may not ſo mix thoſe articles with other principles pernicious to it, that they may ſeem at firſt ſight worſe than atheiſm. We affirm only, that, to take the whole of ſuch a religion, it is more advantageous to ſociety to have it, than to be deſtitute of it. All, therefore, that is objected againſt our propoſition, concerning thoſe wars, cruſades, and perſecutions, which were cauſed by ſuperſtition, all this is only vain ſophiſtry, which doth not affect our theſis in the leaſt.

Thirdly. When we ſay, *Society cannot subsist without religion*, we do not ſay, that religion, even the pureſt religion, may not cauſe ſome diſorders in ſociety: but we affirm only, that theſe diſorders, however numerous, cannot counterbalance the benefits, which religion procures to it. So that all objections, taken from the troubles, which zeal for truth may have produced in ſome circumſtances, are only vain objections, that cannot weaken our propoſition.

Fourthly. When we affirm, *Society cannot subsist without religion*, we do not affirm, that all the virtues, which are diſplayed in ſociety, proceed from religious principles; ſo that all juſt magiſtrates are juſt for their love of equity; that all grave eccleſiaſtics are ſerious, becauſe they reſpect their character; that all chaſte women are chaſte from a principle of love to virtue: human motives, we freely grant, often prevail inſtead of better. We affirm only, that religious principles are infinitely more proper to regulate ſociety than human motives. Many perſons, we maintain, do actually govern their conduct by religious principles, and ſociety would

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be incomparably more irregular, were there no religion in it. That list of virtues, therefore, which only education and constitution produce, doth not at all affect the principle, which we are endeavoring to establish, and he, who takes his objections from it, doth but beat the air.

Lastly. When we affirm, *Society cannot subsist without religion*, we do not say, that all atheists and deists ought therefore to abandon themselves to all sorts of vices: nor that they, who have embraced atheism, if indeed there have been any such, were always the most wicked of mankind. Many people of these characters, we own, lived in a regular manner. We affirm only, that irreligion, of itself, openeth a door to all sorts of vices; and that men are so formed, that their disorders would increase, were they to disbelieve the doctrines of the existence of a God, of judgment, and of Providence. All the examples, therefore, that are alledged against us, of a Diagoras, of a Theodorus, of a Pliny, of a Vanini, of some societies, real, or chimerical, who, it is pretended, lived regular lives without the aid of religion; all these examples, I say, make nothing against our hypothesis.

These explanations being granted, we maintain, that no politician can succeed in a design of uniting men in one social body, without supposing the truth and reality of religion. For, if there be no religion, each member of society may do what he pleaseth; and then each would give a loose to his passions; each would employ his power in crushing the weak, his cunning in deceiving the simple, his eloquence in seducing the credulous, his credit in ruining commerce, his authority in distressing the whole with horror and terror, and carnage and blood. Frightful disorders in their nature: but necessary on principles of infidelity! For if you suppose, these disorders may be prevented, their prevention must

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be attributed, either to private interest, to worldly honor, or to human laws.

But *private interest* cannot supply the place of religion. True, were all men to agree to obey the precepts of religion, each would find his own account in his own obedience. But it doth not depend on an individual to oppose a popular torrent, to reform the public, and to make a new world: and, while the world continues in its present state, he will find a thousand circumstances, in which virtue is incompatible with private interest.

Nor can *worldly honor* supply the place of religion. For what is worldly honor? It is a superficial virtue; an art, that one man possesseth, of disguising himself from another; of deceiving politely; of appearing virtuous, rather than of being actually so. If you extend the limits of worldly honor further, if you make it consist in that purity of conscience, and in that rectitude of intention, which are in effect firm and solid foundations of virtue, you will find, either that this is only a fine idea of what almost nobody is capable of, or, if I may be allowed to say so, that the virtues, which compose your complex idea of worldly honor, are really branches of religion.

Finally. *Human laws* cannot supply the place of religion. To whatever degree of perfection they may be improved, they will always savour in three things of the imperfection of the legislators.

1. They will be *imperfect in their substance.* They may prohibit, indeed, enormous crimes: but they cannot reach refined irregularities, which are not the less capable of troubling society for appearing less atrocious. They may forbid murder, theft, and adultery: but they can neither forbid avarice, anger, nor concupiscence. They will avail in the preserving and

disposing of property, they may command the payment of taxes to the crown, and of debts to the merchant, the cultivation of sciences, and liberal arts: but they cannot ordain patience, meekness, and love; and, you will grant, a society, in which there is neither patience, meekness, nor love, must needs be an unhappy society.

2. Human laws will be *weak in their motives.* The rewards, which they offer, may be forborne, for men may do without them; the punishments, which they inflict, may be suffered; and there are some particular cases, in which they, who derogate from their authority, may advance their own interest more than if they constantly and scrupulously submit to it.

3. Human laws will be *restrained in their extent.* Kings, tyrants, masters of the world, know the art of freeing themselves from them. The laws avenge us on an insignificant thief, whom the pain of hunger and the fear of death tempted to break open our houses, to rob us of a trifling sum: but who will avenge us of magnificent thieves? For, my brethren, some men, in court-cabinets, in dedicatory epistles, in the sermons of flatterers, and in the prologues of poets, are called conquerors, heroes, demi-gods; but in this pulpit, in this church, in the presence of the God, who filleth this house, and who regardeth not the appearances of men, you conquerors, you heroes, you demi-gods, are often nothing but thieves and incendiaries. Who shall avenge us of those men, who, at the head of a hundred thousand slaves, ravage the whole world, pillage on the right hand and on the left, violate the most sacred rights, and overwhelm society with injustice and oppression? Who doth not perceive the insufficiency of human laws on this article, and the absolute necessity of religion?

III. The

III. The infidel carrieth his *indocility* to the utmoſt degree of extravagance, by undertaking alone to oppoſe all mankind, and by audaciouſly preferring his own judgment above that of the whole world, who, excepting a ſmall number, have unanimouſly embraced the truths, which he rejects.

This argument, taken from unanimous conſent, furniſheth in favor of religion, either a bare preſumption, or a real demonſtration, according to the different faces, under which it is preſented.

It furniſheth a proof, perhaps more than preſumptive, when it is oppoſed to the objections, which an unbelieving philoſopher alledgeth againſt religion. For, although the faith of a rational man ought not to be founded on a plurality of ſuffrages, yet unanimity of opinion is reſpectable, when it hath three characters. 1. *When an opinion prevails in all places.* Prejudice varies with climates, and whatever depends on human caprice, differs in France, and in Spain, in Europe, and in Aſia, according as the inhabitants of each country have their blood hot or cold; their imagination ſtrong or weak. 2. *When an opinion prevails at all times.* Prejudices change with the times; years inſtruct; and experience corrects errors, which ages have rendered venerable. 3. *When an opinion is contrary to the paſſions of men.* A prejudice, that controuls human paſſions, cannot be of any long duration. The intereſt that a man hath in diſcovering his miſtake, will put him on uſing all his endeavors to develope a deluſion. Theſe three characters agree to truth only.

I am aware, that ſome pretend to enervate this argument by the teſtimonies of ſome ancient hiſtorians, and by the relations of ſome modern travellers, who tell us of ſome individuals, and of ſome whole ſocieties, who are

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deſtitute of the knowledge of God, and of religion.

But, in order to a ſolid reply, we arrange theſe atheiſts, and deiſts, who are oppoſed to us, in three different claſſes. The firſt conſiſts of philoſophers, the next of the ſenſeleſs populace, and the laſt of profligate perſons. *Philosophers*, if you attend cloſely to the matter, will appear, at leaſt the greateſt part of them will appear, to have been accuſed of having no religion, only becauſe they had a purer religion than the reſt of their fellow citizens. They would not admit a plurality of gods, they were, therefore, accuſed of believing no God. The infidelity of *the senseless populace*, is favorable to our argument. We affirm, wherever there is a ſpark of reaſon, there is alſo a ſpark of religion. Is it aſtoniſhing that they, who have renounced the former, ſhould renounce the latter alſo? As to *the profligate*, who extinguiſh their own little light, we ſay of them, with a modern writer, *It is glorious to religion to have enemies of this character.*

But let us ſee, whether this unanimous conſent, which hath afforded us a preſumption in favor of religion, will furniſh us with a demonſtration againſt thoſe who oppoſe it.

Authority ought never to prevail over our minds againſt a judgment, grounded on ſolid reaſons, and received on a cool examination. But authority, eſpecially an authority founded on unanimity of ſentiments, ought always to ſway our minds in regard to a judgment formed without ſolid reaſons, without examination, and without diſcuſſion. No men deſerve to be called the moſt *foolish*, and the *most brutish** *among the people*,

* Mr. Saurin follows the reading of the French verſion, les *plus* brutaux, *most* brutiſh. This is perfectly agreeable to the original, for the Hebrew forms the ſuperlative degree by prefixing the letter *beth* to a noun-ſubſtantive, which follows an adjective, as here,

people, so much as those men, who, being as the greatest number of infidels are, without study, and without knowledge; who, without deigning to weigh, and even without condescending to hear the reasons, on which all the men in the world, except a few, found the doctrine of the existence of God, and of Providence, give themselves an air of infidelity, and insolently say; Mercury Trismegistus, Zoroaster, Pythagoras, Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, Seneca; moreover, Moses, Solomon, Paul, and the apostles, taught such and such doctrines: but, for my part, I am not of their opinion. And on what ground, pray, do you reject the doctrines, which have been defended by such illustrious men? Do you know, that, of all characters, there is not one so difficult to sustain, as that, which you affect? For, as you deny the most common notions, the clearest truths, sentiments which are the most generally received, if you would maintain an appearance of propriety of character, you must be a superior genius. You must make profound researches, digest immense volumes, and discuss many an abstract question. You must learn the art of evading demonstrations, of palliating sophisms, of parrying ten thousand thrusts, that from all parts will be taken at you. But you, contemptible genius! you idiot! you, who hardly know how to arrange two words without offending against the rules of grammar, or to associate two ideas without shocking common sense, how do you expect to sustain a character, which the greatest geniuses are incapable of supporting?

IV. Yet, as no man is so unreasonable as not to profess to reason; and as no man takes up a notion

Cant. 1. 8. Prov. xxx. 30. hominum brutissimi; hominum stipudissimi; totius hujus populi stupidissimi; say commentators.

notion so eagerly as not to pique himself on having taken it up after a mature deliberation; we must talk to the infidel as to a philosopher, who always follows the dictates of reason, and argues by principles and consequences. Well then! Let us examine *his logic*, or, as I said before, *his way of reasoning*; his way of reasoning, you will see, is his brutality, and his logic constitutes his extravagance.

In order to comprehend this, weigh, in the most exact and equitable balance, the argument of our prophet. "He, that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He, that formed the eye, shall he not see? He, that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? He, that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?" These are, in brief, three sources of evidences, which supply the whole of religion with proof. The first are taken from the works of nature; *He, who planted the ear; He, who formed the eye.* The second are taken from the economy of Providence; *He, that chastiseth the heathen.* The third are taken from the history of the church; *He, that teacheth man knowledge.*

The first are taken from the wonderful works of *nature*. The prophet alledgeth only two examples; the one is that of the *ear*, the other that of the *eye*. None can communicate what he hath not, is the most incontestible of all principles. He, who communicateth faculties to beings, whom he createth, must needs possess whatever is most noble in such faculties. He, who empowered creatures to hear, must himself hear. He, who imparted the faculty of discerning objects, must needs himself discern them. Consequently, there is great extravagance in saying, *The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.*

The same argument, which the structure of our ears, and that of our eyes, affords us, we

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derive alſo from all the wonderful works of the Creator. The Creator poſſeſſeth all thoſe great and noble excellencies, in a ſupreme degree, the faint ſhadows of which he hath communicated to creatures. On this principle, what an idea ought we to form of the Creator? From what a profound abyſs of power muſt thoſe boundleſs ſpaces have proceeded, that immeaſurable extent, in which imagination is loſt, thoſe vaſt bodies, that ſurround us, thoſe luminous globes, thoſe flaming ſpheres, which revolve in the heavens, along with all the other works, that compoſe this univerſe? From what an abyſs of wiſdom muſt the ſucceſſions of ſeaſons, of day, and of night, have proceeded, thoſe glittering ſtars, ſo exact in their courſes, and ſo punctual in their duration; along with all the different ſecret ſprings in the univerſe, which with the utmoſt accuracy anſwer their deſign? From what an abyſs of intelligence muſt rational creatures come, beings, who conſtitute the glory of the intelligent world; profound politicians, who pry into the moſt intricate folds of the human heart; generals, who diffuſe themſelves through a whole army, animating with their eyes, and with their voices, the various regiments, which compoſe their forces; admirable geniuſes, who develope the myſteries of nature, riſing into the heavens by dioptrics, deſcending into the deepeſt ſubterranean abyſſes; quitting continental confinement by the art of navigation; men, who croſs the waves, and, in ſpite of the winds, contemn the rocks, and direct a few planks faſtened together to ſail to the more diſtant climes? Who can refuſe to the author of all theſe wonderful works the faculty of ſeeing and hearing?

But I do not pretend to deny, an infidel will ſay, that all theſe wonderful works owe their exiſtence to a Supreme cauſe; or that the Supreme Being, by whom alone they exiſt, doth not

not himself possess all possible perfection. But I affirm, that the Supreme Being is so great, and so exalted, that his elevation and inconceivable excellence prevent him from casting his eyes down to the earth, and paying any regard to what a creature so mean and so indigent as man performs. A Being of infinite perfection, does he interest himself in my conduct? Will he stoop to examine, whether I retain or discharge the wages of my servants? Whether I be regular or irregular in my family? and so on. A king, surrounded with magnificence and pomp, holding in his powerful hands the reigns of his empire; a king, employed in weighing reasons of state, in equipping his fleets, and in levying his armies; will he concern himself with the demarches of a few worms crawling beneath his feet?

But this comparison of God to a king, and of men to worms, is absurd and inconclusive. The economy of Providence, and the history of the church, in concert with the wonderful works of nature, discover to us ten thousand differences between the relations of God to men, and those of a king to worms of the earth. No king hath given intelligent souls to worms: but God hath given intelligent souls to us. No king hath proved, by ten thousand avenging strokes, and by ten thousand glorious rewards, that he observed the conduct of worms: but God, by ten thousand glorious recompenses, and by ten thousand vindictive punishments, hath proved his attention to the conduct of men. No king hath made a covenant with worms: but God hath entered into covenant with us. No king hath commanded worms to obey him: but God, we affirm, hath ordained our obedience to him. No king can procure eternal felicity to worms: but God can communicate endless happiness to us. A king, although he be a king, is yet a man; his

his mind is little and contracted, yea infinitely contracted; it would be abſurd, that he, being called to govern a kingdom, ſhould fill his capacity with trifles: But is this your notion of the Deity? The direction of the ſun, the government of the world, the formation of myriads of beings, which live through univerſal nature, the management of the whole univerſe, cannot exhauſt that intelligence, who is the object of our adoration and praiſe. While his thoughts include, in their boundleſs compaſs, all real and all poſſible beings, his eyes ſurvey every individual, as if each were the ſole object of his attention.

Theſe arguments being thus ſtated, either our infidel muſt acknowledge, that they, at leaſt, render probable the truth of religion in general, and of this theſis in particular, *God regardeth the actions of men*: or he refuſeth to acknowledge it. If he refuſe to acknowledge it; if he ſeriouſly affirm, that all theſe arguments, very far from ariſing to demonſtration, do not even afford a probability in favor of religion; then he is an idiot, and there remains no other argument to propoſe to him, than that of our prophet, *Thou fool, when wilt thou be wise?*

I even queſtion whether any unbeliever could ever perſuade himſelf of what he endeavors to perſuade others; that is, that the aſſemblage of truths, which conſtitute the body of natural religion; that the heavy ſtrokes of juſtice avenging vice, and the extatic rewards accompanying virtue, which appear in Providence; that the accompliſhment of numerous prophecies; that the operation of countleſs miracles, which are related in authentic hiſtories of the church: no, I cannot believe, that any infidel could ever prevail with himſelf to think, that all this train of argument doth not form a probability againſt a ſyſtem of infidelity and atheiſm.

But if the power and the ſplendor of truth force his conſent; if he be obliged to own, that, although my arguments are not demonſtrative, they are, however, in his opinion, probable; then, with the prophet, I ſay to him, *O thou most brutiſh among the people!*

V. Why? Becauſe in comparing his logic with his *morality*, (and this is my fifth article) I perceive, that nothing but an exceſs of brutality can unite theſe two things. Hear how he reaſons. "It is probable, not only that there is a God, but alſo that this God regardeth the actions of men, that he reſerves to himſelf the puniſhment of thoſe, who follow the ſuggeſtions of vice, and the rewarding of them, who obey the laws of virtue. The ſyſtem of irreligion is counterbalanced by that of religion. Perhaps irreligion may be well grounded: but perhaps religion may be ſo. In this ſtate of uncertainty, I will direct my conduct on the principle, that irreligion is well grounded, and that religion hath no foundation. *I will break in pieces*, ver. 5. (this was the language, according to our pſalmiſt, of the unbelievers of his time) *I will break in pieces the people of God; I will afflict his heritage; I will slay the widow and the stranger*; or, to ſpeak agreeably to the genius of our own time, I will ſpend my life in pleaſure, in gratifying my ſenſual appetites, in avoiding what would check me in my courſe, in a word, in living as if I were able to demonſtrate either that there was no God, or that he paid no regard to the actions of men." Ought he not, rather, on the contrary, as his mind is in a ſtate of uncertainty between both, to attach himſelf to that, which is the moſt ſafe? Ought he not to ſay? "I will ſo regulate my conduct, that, if there be a God, whoſe exiſtence, indeed, I doubt, but, however, am not able to diſprove: If God pay any regard to the actions of men, which

which I queſtion, but cannot deny; he may not condemn me." Judge, ye chriſtians! men, who can thus brutally inſult a dark futurity, and the bare poſſibility of thoſe puniſhments, which religion denounceth againſt the wicked; ſuch men, are they not, either the moſt fooliſh, or the moſt brutiſh, among the people? "Underſtand, ye moſt brutiſh among the people! Ye fools! When will ye be wiſe?"

VI. I would attack *the conscience* of the libertine, and terrify him with the language of my text. "He, who teacheth man knowledge, ſhall not he correct?" That is to ſay, "He, who gave you laws, ſhall not he regard your violation of them?" The perſons whom I attack, I am aware, have defied us to find the leaſt veſtige of what is called conſcience in them. But had you thoroughly examined yourſelves, when you ſet us at defiance on this article? Have you been as ſucceſsful, as you pretend to have been, in your daring enterprize of freeing yourſelves entirely from the terrors of conſcience? Is this light quite extinct? This interior maſter, doth he dictate nothing to you? This rack of the Almighty, doth it never force you to confeſs what you would willingly deny? Are your knees ſo firm, that they never ſmite together with dread and horror?

The queſtion, concerning the poſſibility of entirely freeing a man from the empire of conſcience, is a matter of fact. We think we have reaſon for affirming, that no man can bring himſelf to ſuch a ſtate. You pretend to be yourſelves a demonſtration to the contrary. You are, you declare, perfectly free from the attacks of conſcience. This is a fact, and I grant it; I take your word. But here is another fact, in regard to which we ought to believe in our turn, and on which our word is worth as much as yours. This is it. We have ſeen a great

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number of ſick people; we have attended a great number of dying people. Among thoſe, to whom, in the courſe of our miniſtry, we have been called, we have met with all ſorts of characters. We have viſited ſome, who once were what you profeſs to be now, people, who boaſted of having freed themſelves from vulgar errors, from the belief of a God, a religion, a hell, a heaven, and of ſaying, when they abandoned themſelves to the utmoſt exceſſes, as you ſay, *The Lord ſhall not ſee; neither ſhall the God of Jacob regard it.* But we have never met with a ſingle individual, no, not one, who hath not contradicted himſelf at the approach of death. It is ſaid ſome have done this. For our parts, we have never met with any ſuch; we have never attended one, who hath not proved by his example, that you will contradict yourſelves alſo. We have often viſited thoſe, who have renounced all their ſyſtems, and have curſed their infidelity a thouſand, and a thouſand times. We have viſited many, who have required the aid of that very religion, which they had ridiculed. We have often ſeen thoſe, who have called ſuperſtition to aſſiſt religion; and who have turned pale, trembled, and ſhaken, at the bare ſight of our habit, before they had heard the ſentence, which God pronounced by our mouths. But we have never ſeen an individual, no, not one, who died in his pretended ſcepticiſm: It remains with you to account for theſe facts. You are to inquire, whether you yourſelves will be more courageous. It belongs to you to examine, whether you can bear thoſe dying agonies, thoſe devouring regrets, thoſe terrible miſgivings, which made your predeceſſors unſay all, and diſcover as much cowardice at death, as they had diſcovered brutality in their lives.

VII. Perhaps you have been ſurprized, my brethren, that we have reſerved the weakeſt of

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our attacks for the laſt. Perhaps you object, that motives, taken from what is called *politeness*, and *a knowledge of the world*, can make no impreſſions on the minds of thoſe, who did not feel the force of our former attacks. It is not without reaſon, however, that we have placed this laſt. Libertines and infidels often pique themſelves on their *gentility*, and *good breeding*. They frequently take up their ſyſtem of infidelity, and purſue their courſe of profaneneſs, merely through their falſe notions of gentility. Reaſon, they think, too ſcholaſtic, and faith, pedantry. They imagine, that, in order to diſtinguiſh themſelves in the world, they muſt affect neither to believe nor to reaſon.

Well! you *accomplished gentleman!* do you know what the world thinks of you? The prophet tells you; but it is not on the authority of the prophet only, it is on the opinions of your fellow citizens, that I mean to perſuade you. You are conſidered in the world as the *most brutish of* mankind. *Understand, ye most brutish among the people!* What is *an accomplished gentleman?* What is politeneſs and good breeding? It is the art of accommodating one's ſelf to the genius of that ſociety, and of ſeeming to enter into the ſentiments of that company, in which we are; of appearing to honor what they honor; of reſpecting what they reſpect; and of paying a regard even to their prejudices, and their weakneſſes. On theſe principles, are you not *the rudest and most unpolished* of mankind? Or, to repeat the language of my text, are you not the *most brutish among the people?* You live among people, who believe a God, and a religion; among people, who were educated in theſe principles, and who deſire to die in theſe principles; among people, who have, many of them, ſacrificed their reputation, their eaſe, and their fortune, to religion. Moreover, you live

in a society, the foundations of which sink with those of religion, so that were the latter undermined, the former would, therefore, be sunk. All the members of society are interested in supporting this edifice, which you are endeavoring to destroy. The magistrate commands you not to publish principles that tend to the subversion of his authority. The people request you not to propagate opinions, which tend to subject them to the passions of a magistrate, who will imagine, he hath no judge superior to himself. This distressed mother, mourning for the loss of her only son, prays you not to deprive her of the consolation, which she derives from her present persuasion, that the son, whom she laments, is in possession of immortal glory. That sick man beseecheth you not to disabuse him of an error, that sweetens all his sorrows. Yon dying man begs you would not rob him of his only hope. The whole world conjures you not to establish truths, (even supposing they were truths, an hypothesis which I deny and detest) the whole world conjures you not to establish truths, the knowledge of which would be fatal to all mankind. In spite of so many voices, in spite of so many prayers, in spite of so many intreaties, and among so many people interested in the establishment of religion; to affirm that religion is a fable, to oppose it with eagerness and obstinacy, to try all your strength, and to place all your glory, in destroying it: What is this but the height of rudeness, brutality, and madness? "Understand, ye most brutish among the people! Ye fools! When will ye be wise?"

Let us put a period to this discourse. We come to you, my brethren! When we preach against characters of these kinds we think, we read what passes in your hearts. You congratulate yourselves, for the most part, for not being of the number, for detesting infidelity, and for respecting,

respecting religion. But shall we tell you, my brethren? How odious soever the men are, whom we have described, we know others more odious still. There is a restriction in the judgment, which the prophet forms of the first, when he calls them in the text, *The most foolish, and the most brutish among the people;* and there are some men, who surpass them in brutality and extravagance.

Do not think we exceed the truth of the matter, or that we are endeavoring to obtain your attention by paradoxes. Really, I speak as I think; I think, there is more ingenuousness, and even, (if I may venture to say so) a less fund of turpitude in men, who, having resolved to roll on with the torrent of their passions, endeavor to persuade themselves, either, that there is no God, or that he pays no regard to the actions of men; than in those, who, believing the existence, and providence of God, live as if they believed neither. Infidels were not able to support, in their excesses, the ideas of an injured benefactor, of an angry Supreme Judge, of an eternal salvation neglected, of daring hell, a *lake burning with fire and brimstone, and smoke ascending up for ever and ever*, Rev. xxi. 8. and xiv. 11. In order to give their passions a free scope, they found it necessary to divert their attention from all these terrifying objects, and to efface such shocking truths from their minds.

But you! who believe the being of a God! You! who believe yourselves under his eye, and who insult him every day without repentance, or remorse! You! who believe, God holds thunder in his hand to crush sinners, and yet live in sin! You! who think, there are devouring flames, and chains of darkness, and yet presumptuously brave their horrors! You! who believe the immortality of your souls, and yet occupy yourselves

yourſelves about nothing but the preſent life ! What a front ! What a brazen front is YOURS !

You conſider a revelation proceeding from heaven, and ſupported by a thouſand authentic proofs. But, if your faith be well grounded, how dangerous is your condition ! For, after all, the number of evidences, who atteſt the religion, which you believe, this number of witneſſes depoſe the truth of the practical part of religion, as well as the truth of the ſpeculative part. Theſe witneſſes atteſt, that " without holineſs, no man ſhall ſee the Lord ;" that " neither thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, ſhall inherit the kingdom of God," Heb. xii. 14. 1 Cor. vi. 10. And conſequently, theſe evidences atteſt, that you thieves, that you covetous, that you drunkards, that you revilers, that you extortioners, ſhall be excluded from that happy manſion. Do you reject this propoſition ? Claſs yourſelves then with infidels. Contradict nature ; contradict conſcience ; contradict the church ; deny the recovery of ſtrength to the lame ; the giving of ſight to the blind ; the raiſing of the dead ; contradict heaven, and earth, and ſea, nature, and every element. Do you admit the propoſition ? Acknowledge then, that you muſt be irretrievably loſt, unleſs your ideas be reformed and renewed, unleſs you renounce the world, that enchants and faſcinates your eyes.

This, my brethren, this is your remedy. This is what we hope for you. This is that, to which we exhort you by the compaſſion of God, and by the great ſalvation, which religion preſents to you. Reſpect this religion. Study it every day. Apply its comforts to your ſorrows, and its precepts to your lives. And, joining promiſes to precepts, and precepts to promiſes, aſſort your chriſtianity. Aſſure yourſelves,

selves, then, of the peace of God in this life, and of a participation of his glory after death. God grant you this grace!—Amen.

SERMON

SERMON IX.

THE HARMONY OF RELIGION AND CIVIL POLITY.

PROVERBS xiv. 34.

Righteousness exalteth a Nation.

TO propoſe maxims of civil polity in a religious aſſembly, to propoſe maxims of religion in a political aſſembly, are two things, which ſeem alike ſenſeleſs and imprudent. The chriſtian is ſo often diſtinguiſhed from the ſtateſman, that, it would ſeem, they were oppoſite characters. We have been lately taught to believe, that Jeſus Chriſt, by giving us an idea of a ſociety more noble than any we can form upon earth, hath forbidden us to prevent the miſeries of this ſtate, and to endeavor to procure the glory of it. It hath been ſaid, that kingdoms and ſtates cannot be elevated without violating the laws of equity, and infringing the rights of the church.

How general ſoever this odious notion may have been, hardly any one hath appeared openly to avow it till of late. The impudence of pleading for it was reſerved for our age, for a chriſtian admitted into your provinces, cheriſhed in your boſom, and, O ſhame of our churches! appearing among proteſtant refugees, as the devil formerly preſented himſelf before the Lord among the angels of God.*

We propoſe to-day, my brethren, to endeavor to unravel the ſophiſms of this author, to ſhew you

* Voyez Bayle, Continuat. des penſees divers. Tom. ii. pag. 598.

you the agreement of religion with civil polity, and to eſtabliſh this propoſition, that as there is nothing in religion to counteract the deſign of a wiſe ſyſtem of civil polity, ſo there is nothing in a wiſe ſyſtem of civil government to counteract the deſign of the chriſtian religion. It was the wiſeſt of all kings, who taught us this leſſon. He ſpeaks of the *exaltation* of a nation, and this is the end of civil polity. He ſpeaks of *righteousness*, and this is the deſign of religion, or rather, this is religion itſelf. He affirms, that the latter is the foundation of the former, and this is the agreement of religion with civil government. It is *righteousness*, ſaith he, it is *righteousness*, that *exalteth a nation*.

This propoſition of Solomon needs both explication and proof; and this diſcourſe is intended to furniſh both.

In our firſt part we will ſtate the queſtion, fix the ſenſe of theſe terms, righteouſneſs, exaltation; we will ſet aſide the various falſe ſenſes, which occaſioned the opinion that we intend to oppoſe; and by theſe means we will preclude ſuch objections as may be made againſt our doctrine.

In the ſecond part, we will alledge ſome arguments in favour of the propoſition contained in the text when properly explained, and ſo prove that *righteousness exalteth a nation*.

This nation is exalted, my brethren: but, allow me to ſay, it is not by its *righteousness*. We have not therefore choſen this text to create an opportunity of making encomiums on you: but we treat of the ſubject in order to fix your attention on the proper means of preſerving and augmenting your elevation. Happy if our deſign meet with ſucceſs! Happy if we contribute, though not according to the extent of our wiſhes, yet according to the utmoſt of our ability, to the glory of this ſtate!

I. We

I. We just now insinuated, that the false glosses put upon the maxim of the wise man were the principal causes of our backwardness to admit the truth of it. It is, therefore, important to state the question clearly.

1. When we affirm that *righteousness* and religion in general, (for it would be easy to prove that the word *righteousness* in the text is to be taken in this vague sense) I say, when we affirm that religion *exalteth a nation*, we do not mean such a religion as many imagine. We ingenuously acknowledge, and would to God the whole world acknowledged! that neither the religion of a cruel man, nor the religion of a superstitious person, nor the religion of an enthusiast, can *exalt a nation*.

How can the religion of a *cruel* man exalt a nation? The religion of such men is too well known for the peace of Europe. Such as these, under pretence of devotion, cut a free course for their own black and inflexible passions. These arm themselves with the civil sword to destroy all, who doubt the truth of their systems; they put violence in the place of demonstration, and endeavor to establish the gospel, as if it were the Koran of Mohammed, by force and constraint. These characters, as I just now said, are too well known for the peace of Europe. Even now, while I speak, I behold many, who have suffered under such cruelty, and have opposed the strongest argument against it. No, my brethren, this is not the religion that *exalteth a nation*. Such a religion depopulates states, ruins commerce, and is a never-failing source of civil wars and intestine commotions. The religion, of which we speak, is a kind, patient, gentle religion; a religion, the grand character of which, is forbearance, benevolence, and fraternal love; a religion inimical to error and heresy: but which, however, pities the erroneous

ous and the heretic; a religion, which exerts itſelf to eradicate falſe doctrines: but which leaves each at liberty to admit the truth; a religion, which hath no other ſword than the *ſword of the Spirit*, nor any other weapon than that of the word.

How can the religion of a *ſuperſtitious* man exalt a nation? It makes devotion degenerate into idleneſs, it increaſeth the number of eccleſiaſtics, and ſo renders many members uſeleſs to ſociety. It waſtes, in pretendedly pious foundations, immenſe ſums, which might have contributed to the advancement of arts and ſciences. It generates ſcruples in the minds of ſtateſmen, and ſo reſtrains the exerciſe of thoſe fine faculties, which God created for the good of the ſtate. It puts the caſuiſt in the place of the prince, and the prince in the place of the caſuiſt, the caſuiſt on the throne, and the prince in confeſſion at his feet. No, my brethren, this is not the religion, of which we ſpeak. The religion, of which we ſpeak, is oppoſite to ſuperſtition. It is juſt and ſolid, requiring us to "render unto Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's, and unto God the things that are God's," Matt. xii. 17. It preſcribes bounds to ſovereigns: but it requires caſuiſts alſo to know their place.

How can the religion of an *enthuſiaſt* contribute to the exaltation of a nation? The ſoul of an enthuſiaſt is always agitated with viſions and reveries. He inceſſantly thruſts himſelf into the company of the great, in order to inſpire them with his own ſpirit, and to breathe into them the ſoul of enthuſiaſm. He endeavors to animate governors, called to watch over a ſtate, and to conduct the people to national happineſs, with his wild ſchemes. He is always talking of extirpating the reformation, and thundering excommunications againſt thoſe, who do not enter into his extravagant projects; his anathemas

are as extravagant and wild as the projects themselves. This is not the religion, of which we speak. The religion, that *exalteth a nation*, is derived from the treasures of the Divine Intelligence; it was formed in the mind of that Supreme Spirit, from whom wisdom proceeds, as the stream flows from the spring: and not in the ideas of a disordered brain, nor in the dreams of a visionary.

We wish you to take religion and righteousness in the *true* sense of the terms. This is our first elucidation. This is the first precaution, that must be used to understand the state of the question.

2. We do not mean to affirm, that the true religion is so necessary in *all* its doctrines, and in *all* the extent of its precepts, that there are no instances of the flourishing of societies, which have not been wholly regulated by it. We acknowledge that some societies of men, who have been only partially governed by its maxims, have enjoyed long and glorious advantages upon the theatre of the world; either because their false religions contained some principles of rectitude in common with the true religion; or because God, in order to animate such people to practise some virtues, superficial indeed, but, however, necessary to the being of society, annexed success to the exercise of them; or because he prospered them to answer some secret designs of his wisdom; or because, finally, rectitude was never so fully established on earth as to preclude injustice from enjoying the advantages of virtue, or virtue from suffering the penalties of vice. However it were, we allow the fact, and we only affirm, that the most sure method, that a nation can take to support and exalt itself, is to follow the laws of righteousness and the spirit of religion. This is a second elucidation tending to state the question clearly.

3. We

3. We do not affirm, that in *every particular case* religion is more successful in procuring some temporal advantage than the violation of it; so that to consider society only in this point of light, and to confine it to this particular case independently of all other circumstances, religion yields the honor of posterity to injustice. We allow, some state crimes have been successful, and have been the steps, by which some people have acquired worldly glory. We even allow, that virtue hath sometimes been an obstacle to grandeur. We only affirm, that, if a nation be considered in every point of light, and in all circumstances, if all things be weighed, it will be found, that the more a society practise virtue, the more prosperity it will enjoy. We affirm, that the more it abandons itself to vice, the more misery will it sooner or later suffer; so that the very vice, which contributed to its exaltation, will produce its destruction; and the very virtue, which seems at first to abase it, will, in the end, exalt it to glory. This is a third elucidation.

4. We do not mean by exaltation, *that sort of elevation*, at which worldly heroes, or rather tyrants, aspire. We acknowledge, that, if by *exalting a nation* be understood an elevation extending itself beyond the limits of rectitude, an elevation not directed by justice and good faith, an elevation consisting of the acquisitions of wanton and arbitrary power, an elevation obliging the whole world to submit to a yoke of slavery, and so becoming an executioner of divine vengeance on all mankind; we allow, that in this sense *exaltation* is not an effect of *righteousness*. But, if we understand by *exalting a nation* whatever governs with gentleness, negociates with success, attacks with courage, defends with resolution, and constitutes the happiness of a people, whatever God always beholds with

with favorable eyes ; if this be what is meant by *exalting a nation*, we affirm, a nation is exalted only by righteouſneſs.

5. In fine, we do not affirm, that the proſperity of ſuch a nation would be ſo perfect as to exclude all untoward circumſtances. We only ſay, that the higheſt glory, and the moſt perfect happineſs, which can be enjoyed by a nation in a world, where, after all, there is always a mixture of adverſity with proſperity, are the fruits of righteouſneſs. Theſe elucidations muſt be retained, not only becauſe they explain the theſis, which we are ſupporting, and becauſe they are the ground of what we ſhall hereafter ſay : but alſo becauſe they ſerve to preclude ſuch objections, to ſolve ſuch difficulties, and to unravel ſuch ſophiſms, as the author, whom we oppoſe, urges againſt us.

One argument againſt us is taken from the abuſes, which religion hath cauſed in ſociety : but this objection is removed, by taking away falſe ideas of religion. A ſecond objection is taken from the caſe of ſome idolatrous nations, who, though they were ſtrangers to revealed religion, have yet arrived at a great height of worldly glory : but this objection is removed by our ſecond elucidation. A third objection is taken from ſome particular caſe, in which vice is of more advantage to a ſtate than virtue : but this objection falls before the manner in which we have ſtated the queſtion. A fourth objection is taken from extravagant notions of glory : but this objection is removed by diſtinguiſhing true exaltation from falſe. Finally, an objection is taken from the evils, which the moſt virtuous ſocieties ſuffer, and we have acknowledged, that this world will always be to public bodies what it is to individuals, a place of miſery, and we have contented ourſelves with affirming, that the moſt ſolid happineſs, which can be enjoyed here,

hath

hath righteousness for its cause. The narrow limits, to which we are confined, will not allow us to carry our reflections any further. They, however, who meditate profoundly on the matter, will easily perceive that all these objections are, if not abundantly refuted, at least sufficiently precluded by our explications.

We will now proceed to shew the grounds of the maxim of the wise man. We will open six sources of reflections; an idea of society in general; the constitution of each government in particular; the nature of arts and sciences; the conduct of providence; the promises of God himself; and the history of all ages. These articles make up the remainder of this discourse.

II. 1. Let us first form an idea of *society in general*, and consider the motives, which induced mankind to unite themselves in society, and to fix themselves in one place. By doing this, we shall perceive, that *righteousness* is the only thing that can render nations happy. Every individual hath infinite wants; but only finite faculties to supply them. Each individual of mankind hath need of knowledge to inform him, laws to direct him, property to support him, medicine to relieve him, aliments to nourish him, clothing and lodging to defend himself against the injuries of the seasons. How easy would it be to enlarge this catalogue! Similar interests form a similar design. Divers men unite themselves together, in order that the industry of all may supply the wants of each.—This is the origin of societies and public bodies of men.

It is easy to comprehend, that, in order to enjoy the blessings proposed by this assemblage, some fixed maxims must be laid down and inviolably obeyed. It will be necessary for all the members of this body to consider themselves as naturally equal, that by this idea they may be inclined to afford each other mutual succor. It will be ne-

ceſſary that they ſhould be ſincere to each other, leſt deceit ſhould ſerve for a vail to conceal the fatal deſigns of ſome from the eyes of the reſt. It will be neceſſary for all to obſerve the rules of rigid equity, that ſo they may fulfil the contracts which they bound themſelves to perform, when they were admitted into this ſociety. It will be neceſſary, that eſteem and benevolence ſhould give life and action to righteouſneſs. It will be neceſſary, that the happineſs of all ſhould be preferred before the intereſt of one; and that in caſes where public and private intereſts claſh, the public good ſhould always prevail. It will be neceſſary, that each ſhould cultivate his own talents, that he may contribute to the happineſs of that ſociety, to which he ought to devote himſelf with the utmoſt ſincerity and zeal.

Now, my brethren, what can be more proper to make us obſerve theſe rules, than religion, than *righteousness?* Religion brings us to feel our natural equality; it teacheth us, that we originate in the ſame duſt, have the ſame God for our Creator, are all deſcended from the ſame firſt parent, all partake of the ſame miſeries, and are all doomed to the ſame laſt end. Religion teacheth us ſincerity to each other, that the tongue ſhould be a faithful interpreter of the mind, that we ſhould *speak every man truth with his neighbor*, Eph. iv. 25. and that, being always in the ſight of the God of truth, we ſhould never depart from the laws of truth. Religion teacheth us to be juſt, that we ſhould "render to all, their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due, cuſtom to whom cuſtom, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor; that whatſoever we would that men ſhould do unto us, we ſhould do even ſo unto them," Rom. xiii. 7. Matt. vii. 12. Religion requireth us to be animated with charity, to conſider each other as creatures of one God, ſubjects of the ſame king, members of one body, and heirs of the ſame glory.

glory. Religion requireth us to give up private intereſt to public good, *not to ſeek our own, but every one another's wealth*; it even requireth us *to lay down our lives for the brethren.* Thus by conſidering nations in theſe primitive views, it is *righteousness* alone that *exalts* them.

2. But all this is too vague. We proceed next to conſider *each form of government in particular.* It is impracticable for all the members of ſociety, on every preſſing occaſion, to aſſemble together and give their ſuffrages. Public bodies therefore agree to ſet apart ſome of their number, who are accounted the ſoul, the will, the determination of the whole. Some nations have committed the ſupreme power to one, whom they call *monarch*; this is a *monarchical* ſtate. Others have committed ſupreme power to a few of their own body, called *magiſtrates*, *ſenators*, *nobles*, or ſome other honorable appellation; this is a republic, called in the ſchools an ariſtocracy. Others have diffuſed ſupreme power more equally among all the members of their ſociety, and have placed it in all heads of families; this is a *popular government*, uſually called a democracy. Society gives its authority and privileges into the hands of theſe perſons; it entruſts and empowers them to make laws, to impoſe taxes, to raiſe ſubſidies, to make peace or declare war, to reward virtue, to puniſh vice; in one word, to do whatever may be beneficial to the whole ſociety, with the felicity of which they are entruſted.

If we conſider theſe various forms of government, we ſhall find, that each nation will be more or leſs happy in its own mode of governing, will more or leſs prevent the inconveniencies to which it is ſubject, according as it ſhall have more or leſs attachment to religion or *righteousness.*

What are the particular inconveniencies of a *monarchical* government? In what caſes is monarchy fatal to the liberty, and ſo to the felicity, of

of a nation? When the monarch, instead of making the good of the people his supreme law, follows nothing but his own caprice. When he thinks himself vested with supreme power for his own glory, and not for the glory of his kingdom. When, by stretching his authority beyond its lawful bounds, he endeavors arbitrarily to dispose of the lives and fortunes of his subjects. When, in order to avenge a private quarrel, or to satiate his thirst for a glory, from which his people derive no benefit, he engageth them in bloody wars, and sacrificeth them to a vain and imaginary grandeur. When he wastes the substance of his people in superb buildings, in excessive embellishments, and in sumptuous equipages. When he imposes on them enormous tributes, and exorbitant taxes. When he is inaccessible to the widow and the orphan. When he gives himself up to indolence, and doth not study the wants of his subjects. When, though he appropriates to himself the advantages of empire, yet, in order to free himself from the fatigue of governing, he commits the reins to a rash counsellor or to an insolent favorite. When he entertains such an idea of royalty as one anciently formed, who defined it a right to do whatever we will with impunity; such an idea as that, which a mean flatterer gave of it to Alexander the Great, Do as many unjust actions as you will, impoverish your subjects by exactions, extortions, and rapines, to satisfy your luxury and ambition, it is all right, it is all lovely, because you choose to have it so.* When, instead of being the father of his people, he strives to be the executioner, like that brutal emperor, who wished the Roman empire had but one head that he might strike it off at a blow.† These are the inconveniencies of the first kind of government.

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* Plutarch ad princip. indoct.

† Sueton. Calig. chap. xxx.

In what cafes is the fecond kind of government hurtful? Is it not, when any one of the magiſtrates, inſtead of conſidering himſelf as a ſingle member of the aſſembly, aims to be at the head of it? When he intrudes into office by ſiniſter means. When he uſeth his power, not for the public good, but for the advancement and glory of his own family. When he is mean enough to ſell his vote. When he ingratiates himſelf with a number of ſeditious people, in order to form cabals, and to engroſs ſupreme power. When he doth not take pains to inform himſelf of the merits of a cauſe, before he determine it. When he aſſociates colleagues with himſelf, whoſe incapacity is intended to be made a foil to his own abilities, inſtead of calling in men more able than himſelf to ſupply his own defects. In fine, when he makes himſelf judge in his own cauſe.

Let us obſerve, laſtly, when a *popular* government becomes hurtful. Is it not when, by a mere principle of levity, laws are made and unmade by caprice? When, under pretence of equality, a proper deference to ſuperior underſtandings is refuſed? When intrigue and cabal give effect to evil counſels? When a powerful faction oppreſſes the virtuous few? When popular liberty degenerates into licentiouſneſs and anarchy, and when the ambition of many becomes an evil, as enormous and fatal as the tyranny of one? Theſe, and many more, are the imperfections of theſe three ſorts of government. Need we to take up your time in proving, that all theſe ills are moſt and beſt precluded by religion? Do we not all recollect ſome ſcripture maxims, which would reſtrain theſe exceſſes? I need not, therefore, multiply quotations to prove this point. Is not each of us convinced, that, if we thus conſider nations in regard to the forms of their government, it is *righteouſneſs* alone that *exalts* them?

3. Our

3. Our doctrine will appear in a clearer light ſtill, if we proceed to examine *the liberal arts and ſciences.* The more a ſociety follows the ſpirit of religion, the more will religion cheriſh them under its foſtering wing. *Juriſprudence* will flouriſh, becauſe law will be diſengaged from ambiguity, which perpetuates animoſities; becauſe counſellors will plead none but juſt cauſes; and becauſe judges will never ſuffer themſelves to be corrupted by *gifts, which blind the eyes of the wiſe:* but will always decide according to the ſpirit of the law, and the dictates of conſcience.

The *military art* will flouriſh, becauſe the ſoldier will not defraud the officer, the officer will not defraud the ſoldier; becauſe both will go into the army, not merely to obtain the favor of their governors, but to pleaſe God; becauſe, being prepared to die by an anticipated repentance, their ardor will not be reſtrained by the fear of falling into the hands of an angry God; becauſe, ſhould they have neglected to conciliate the favor of God before a battle, they would be perſuaded, even in the heat of it, that the beſt way to pleaſe him would be to diſcharge the duty of their office; whereas when ſoldiers feel their conſciences agitated, when amidſt the diſcharge of the artillery of their enemies they diſcover eternal flames, when they ſee hell opening under their feet, and the horrors of eternal puniſhment ſucceeding thoſe of the field of battle, they will always fight with reluctance, and endeavor to avoid future miſery by fleeing away from preſent death.

In a virtuous ſtate, *commerce* will flouriſh, becauſe the merchant, always ſpeaking the truth, and dealing with good faith, will attract general credit and confidence; always following the rules of wiſdom and prudence, he will never engage in raſh undertakings, which ruin families and

and subvert whole houses; not being animated with avarice or vain glory, he will not first acquire riches by injustice, and next waste them with indiscretion; depending on the blessings of heaven, all his labors will be enlivened with courage and joy.

In such a state, *divinity* will flourish, because each, burning with zeal for the glory of God, will carefully cultivate a science, which hath God for its object; because, being free from a party spirit, he will receive the truth, whatever hand may present it to him; because, by referring religion to its chief end, he will not spend his life in the pursuit of trifles; because, full of zeal for his salvation, he will be attentive to every step towards it; because, not being enslaved by his passions, he will not be enveloped in the darkness produced by them; or, to express myself in the language of scripture, because, by doing *the will of God, he will know whether* such and such *doctrines* come from the Supreme Being, or from the preacher only, John vii. 17.

The *mechanical arts* will flourish in a virtuous state, because they, on whom God hath not bestowed genius equal to the investigation of abstract sciences, whom he hath fitted for less noble stations in society, will fill up those stations with the utmost care, and will be happy in deriving from them such advantages as they produce. Thus a just notion of arts and sciences opens to us a third source of arguments to prove the truth of our text.

4. The doctrine of *providence* opens a fourth, as others have observed. The conduct of providence, in regard to public bodies, is very different from that, which prevails in the case of individuals. In regard to the latter, providence is involved in darkness. Many times it seems to condemn virtue and crown injustice, and to leave innocence to groan in silence, and to em-

power

power guilt to riot and triumph in public. The wicked rich man *fared sumptuously every day*, Lazarus *desired* in vain *to be fed with the crumbs that fell from his table*, Luke xvi. 19, 21. St. Paul was executed on a ſcaffold. Nero reigned on Cæſar's throne. And to ſay all in one word, Jeſus Chriſt was born in a ſtable, and Herod lived and died in a palace.

But providence is directed in a different method in regard to public bodies. Proſperity in them is the effect of righteouſneſs, public happineſs is the reward of public virtue, the wiſeſt nation is uſually the moſt ſucceſsful, and virtue walks with glory by her ſide. God ſometimes indeed afflicts the moſt virtuous nations: but he doth ſo with the deſign of purifying them, and of opening new occaſions to beſtow larger benefits on them. He ſometimes indeed proſpers wicked nations; but their proſperity is an effort of his patience and long ſuffering, it is to give them time to prevent their deſtruction; yet, after all, as I ſaid before, proſperity uſually follows righteouſneſs in public bodies, public happineſs is the reward of public virtue, the wiſeſt nation is the moſt ſucceſsful, and glory is generally connected with virtue.

They, to whom we are indebted for this reflection, have grounded it on this reaſon. A day will come when Lazarus will be indemnified, and the rich man puniſhed; St. Paul will be rewarded, and Nero will be confounded; Jeſus Chriſt will fill a throne, and Herod will be covered with ignominy. Innocence will be avenged, juſtice ſatisfied, the majeſty of the laws repaired, and the rights of God maintained.

But ſuch retribution is impracticable in regard to public bodies. A nation cannot be puniſhed then as a nation, a province as a province, a kingdom as a kingdom. All different ſorts of government will be then aboliſhed. One indi-

vidual

vidual of a people will be put in poſſeſſion of glory, while another will be covered with ſhame and confuſion of face. It ſhould ſeem, then, that providence owes to its own rectitude thoſe times of vengeance, in which it pours all its wrath on wicked ſocieties, ſends them plagues, wars, famines, and other cataſtrophies, of which hiſtory gives us ſo many memorable examples. To place hopes altogether on worldly policy, to pretend to derive advantages from vice, and ſo to found the happineſs of ſociety on the ruins of religion and virtue, what is this but to inſult providence?—This is to arouze that power againſt us, which ſooner or later overwhelms and confounds vicious ſocieties.

5. If the obſcurity of the ways of providence, which uſually renders doubtful the reaſonings of men on its conduct, weaken the laſt argument, let us proceed to conſider, in the next place, the declarations of God himſelf on this article. The whole twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, all the bleſſings and curſes pronounced there, fully prove our doctrine. Read this tender complaint, which God formerly made concerning the irregularities of his people. "O that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this, that they would conſider their latter end! How ſhould one chace a thouſand, or two put ten thouſand to flight?" chap. xxxii. 29, 30. Read the affecting words, which he uttered by the mouth of his prophet, "O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Iſrael had walked in my ways! I ſhould ſoon have ſubdued their enemies, and turned my hand againſt their adverſaries. Their time ſhould have endured forever. I ſhould have fed them alſo with the fineſt of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock ſhould I have ſatisfied them," Pſalm lxxxi. 13, &c. Read the noble promiſes made by the miniſtry of Iſaiah, "Thus ſaith the Lord thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Iſrael, I am the

Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way thou ſhouldeſt go. O that thou hadſt hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteouſneſs as the waves of the ſea: thy ſeed alſo had been as the ſand, and thy name ſhould not have been cut off, nor deſtroyed from before me," chap. xlviii. 17, &c. Read the terrible threatenings denounced by the prophet Jeremiah, "Though Moſes and Samuel ſtood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: caſt them out of my ſight, and let them go forth. And it ſhall come to paſs, if they ſay unto thee, Whither ſhall we go forth? then thou ſhalt tell them, Thus ſaith the Lord, Such as are for death, to death; and ſuch as are for the ſword, to the ſword; and ſuch as are for the famine, to the famine; and ſuch as are for the captivity, to the captivity. And I will appoint over them four kinds, ſaith the Lord; the ſword to ſlay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beaſts of the earth, to devour and deſtroy. For who ſhall have pity upon thee, O Jeruſalem? or who ſhall bemoan thee? or who ſhall go aſide to aſk how thou doeſt? Thou haſt forſaken me, ſaith the Lord, thou art gone backward: therefore will I ſtretch out my hand againſt thee, and deſtroy thee; I am weary of repenting," chap. xv. 1, &c. The language of our text is agreeable to all theſe paſſages; it is *righteousness*, ſaith the text, it is righteouſneſs that *exalteth a nation*. Thus God ſpeaks; moreover, thus he acts, as we ſhall ſhew you in the next article.

6. *The history of all ages* affords us another claſs of arguments in defence of our doctrine, and ſo proves the truth of it by experience.

Had ever preacher a wider or more fruitful field than this, which opens to our view in this part of our diſcourſe? Shall we produce you a liſt of Egyptians, Perſians, Aſſyrians, and Greeks,

or

or Romans who ſurpaſſed them all? Shall we ſhew you all theſe nations by turns exalted as they reſpected righteouſneſs, or abaſed as they neglected it?

By what myſterious art did ancient Egypt ſubſiſt with ſo much glory during a period of fifteen or ſixteen ages?* By a benevolence ſo extenſive, that he, who refuſed to relieve the wretched, when he had it in his power to aſſiſt him, was himſelf puniſhed with death: by a juſtice ſo impartial, that their kings obliged the judges to take an oath, that they would never do any thing againſt their own conſciences, though they, the kings themſelves, ſhould command them: by an averſion to bad princes, ſo fixed, as to deny them the honors of a funeral: by invariably rendering to merit public praiſe, even beyond the grave; for when an Egyptian died, a ſeſſion was held for the direct purpoſe of inquiring how he had ſpent his life, ſo that all the reſpect due to his memory might be paid: by entertaining ſuch juſt ideas of the vanity of life, as to conſider their houſes as inns, in which they were to lodge as it were only for a night, and their ſepulcres as habitations, in which they were to abide many ages, in which, therefore, they united all the ſolidity and pomp of architecture, witneſs their famous pyramids: by a life ſo laborious, that even their amuſements were adapted to ſtrengthen the body, and improve the mind: by a readineſs to diſcharge their debts ſo remarkable, that they had a law, which prohibited the borrowing of money, except on condition of pledging the body of a parent for payment, a depoſit ſo venerable, that a man, who deferred the redemption of it, was looked upon with horror: in one word, by a wiſdom ſo profound, that Moſes himſelf is renowned in ſcripture for being *learned in it.*

By

* Diodor. Sicil. lib. i. ſect. 2. Herod. lib. ii.

By what marvellous method did the Perſians obtain ſuch a diſtinguiſhed place of honor in ancient hiſtory?* By conſidering falſehood in the moſt horrid light, as a vice the meaneſt and moſt diſgraceful: by a noble generoſity, conferring favors on the nations they conquered, and leaving them to enjoy all the enſigns of their former grandeur: by an univerſal equity, obliging themſelves to publiſh the virtues of their greateſt enemies: by obſerving, as an inviolable ſecret, ſtate affairs, ſo that, to uſe the language of an ancient author, neither promiſes nor threatenings could extort it, for the ancient laws of the kingdom obliged them to be ſilent under pain of death: by a decorum ſo regular, that queens and all court ladies quitted the table as ſoon as ever the company began to lay aſide moderation in drinking: by religiouſly recording noble actions, and tranſmitting them to poſterity in public regiſters: by educating their children ſo wiſely, that they were taught virtue as other nations were taught letters: by diſcovering no grief for ſuch youths as died uneducated. The children of the royal family were put, at fourteen years of age, into the hands of four of the wiſeſt and moſt virtuous ſtateſmen. The firſt taught them the worſhip of the gods; the ſecond trained them up to ſpeak truth and practiſe equity; the third habituated them to ſubdue voluptuouſneſs, to enjoy real liberty, to be always princes, and always maſters of themſelves and their own paſſions; the fourth inſpired them with courage, and, by teaching them how to command themſelves, taught them how to maintain dominion over others.

We purpoſely omit the noble and virtuous actions of the Aſſyrians, and Medes, the Greeks, and other nations, who were the glory of the ages in which they lived. But let us not paſs by ancient

* Herod. lib. i. iii. Plat. Alcib. 1.

ancient Rome: Was ever nation more exalted?* One expreſſion of Cæſar will give us a juſt notion of their excellence. Cicero recommended a friend to him, and this was his anſwer: *In regard to Marcus Furius, whom you have recommended to me, I will make him king of Gaul. If you have any other friends you wish to have promoted, you may command me.*† But by what unheard-of prodigy did old Rome, compoſed at firſt of no more than three thouſand inhabitants, carry conqueſt in leſs than ſix hundred years to the ends of the earth? Thus ſpeaks the Emperor Julian. By what impenetrable ſecret did this confuſed mixture of vagabonds and thieves become a ſeminary of heroiſm and grandeur? By a wiſe docility, ſo that even kings ſometimes ſubmitted to the advice of individuals; witneſs Tullus Hoſtilius, who durſt not decide the caſe of Horatius, but referred it to the people:‡ by an obſervation of the law ſo ſtrict, that Brutus condemned his two ſons to die by the hands of the public executioner, for having liſtened to the ambitious propoſals of the Tarquins, who were conſpiring to enſlave the citizens, and remount the throne: by a frugality ſo great, that ſuch men as Curius, Fabricius, Regulus, Æmilius, Paulus, and Mummius, theſe great deliverers of the Roman people, were ſeen to feed their own cattle, to cultivate their lands, and to live without pomp and parade: by an excellent economy, ſo that Atilius Regulus, who commanded a Roman army in Africa, demanded leave of the Senate to go home and provide for the wants of his family, from whom a day laborer had ſtolen the working tools uſed in cultivating his eſtate of

* Montaign de la grandeur Romaine, lib. ii. chap. 24.

† Cicer. Epiſt. ad famil. lib. vii. 5. Some copies read not Furius, but M. Orſius. See Spanheim in the Cæſars, page 161.

‡ Liv. lib. i. 16.

ſeven acres ; a requiſition ſo juſt, that the Senate engaged to buy tools, to cultivate his land, and to ſupport his wife and children at the public charge :* ſo far did they carry this virtue, that the elder Cato, returning from Spain to Italy, ſold his horſe to ſave the charge of freight, and uſually, when he travelled, carried his own knapſack, which contained all his travelling neceſſaries : by an ardent love for the general good, ſo that every thing was reſerved for the public : temples, baths, roads, aqueducts, triumphal arches, all were ſuperb, when the national glory was in view, as all things for the uſe of individuals were plain : by an utter averſion to uſeleſs bravery, ſo that they conſidered in a light equally mean, the general, who expoſed his perſon needleſsly, and him, who avoided danger, when the public good rendered it neceſſary for him to expoſe himſelf :† by a ſcrupulous caution not to undertake unjuſt wars ; to guard againſt which, they had a college at Rome, where it was coolly examined, whether an intended war were juſt or unjuſt, before it was propoſed to the ſenate and the people :‡ by an unſurmountable averſion to every ſpecie of military fraud, ſo that Lucius Marcius, (my brethren, how ought this idea of Pagan heroes to cover ſome with confuſion, who oſtentatiouſly affect to play the hero in the chriſtian world !) Lucius Marcius, I ſay, having deceived Perſes, king of Macedonia, by giving him falſe hopes of peace, and having conquered him by this ſtratagem, was adjudged by the ſenate to have violated the Roman laws, and to have ſwerved from the ancient cuſtoms, according to which it was a maxim to conquer by valor and not by fraud.

If,

* Liv. Epitom. lib. 18. Montagne de la parſimonie des anciens, lib. i. chap. 52.

† Salluſt de bell. Catil. ix.

‡ Coll. des feciaux. Dion. Halic. lib. ii. Antiq. Rom. lib. i. 32.

If, having ſhewn the cauſe of the proſperity of ancient nations, we were to inquire into the reaſons of their decline; were we to compare the Egyptians under their wiſe kings with the Egyptians in a time of anarchy, the Perſians victorious under Cyrus, with the Perſians enervated by the luxuries of Aſia, the Romans at liberty under the Conſuls, with the Romans enſlaved by their Emperors, we ſhould find, that the decline of each of theſe nations was owing to the practice of vices oppoſite to the virtues which had cauſed its elevation: we ſhould be obliged to acknowledge, that vain glory, luxury, voluptuouſneſs, diſunion, envy, and boundleſs ambition, were the hateful means of ſubverting ſtates, which, in the height of their proſperity, expected, and in all appearance juſtly expected, to endure to the end of time: we ſhould be obliged to allow, that ſome exceſſes, which, in certain circumſtances, had contributed to exalt theſe nations, were, in other circumſtances, the means of ruining them.

True, ambition impelled Cæſar to elevate the Republic of Rome to a pitch as high as it is poſſible for human grandeur to attain. Armed for the defence of the Republic, he fought for it, though leſs for it than for his own glory, and diſplayed, we grant, the Roman eagle in the furtheſt parts of Aſia, rendered Gaul tributary, ſwelled the Rhine with German blood, ſubdued the Britons, and made all the Adriatic coaſts reſound the fame of his victories. But did not the ſame ambition impel him to excite a civil war to arm Rome againſt Rome, to cover the Pharſalian field with carnage and ſoak the ground with Roman blood, to purſue the ſhattered remains of Pompey's army into the heart of Africa, to give a queen, or rather a proſtitute, the kingdom of Egypt, to reduce the firſt and moſt free of all nations to a ſtate of meanneſs and ſervility beneath the moſt

abject

abject of mankind? For, my brethren, what were these Romans after they had lost their liberty, and given themselves up to absolute masters? These Romans, who had given the universe law; these Roman citizens, even the meanest of them, who would have thought themselves disgraced had they mixed their blood with that of kings; these Romans, once so jealous of their liberty, have we not seen these very people under their emperors submit to vassalage so as to become a scandal even to slaves? Infamous flatterers, did not they erect altars to Claudius, Caligula, and Nero? Did not Rome hear one of its citizens address this language to the last of these monsters? "Choose, Cæsar, what place you will among the immortal gods. Will you sway the sceptre of Jupiter, or mount the chariot of Apollo? There is not a deity, who will not yield his empire to you, and count it an honor to resign in your favor."*

But is it necessary to quote ancient history in proof of what we have advanced, that is, that the same vices, which contribute at first to exalt a nation, in the end cause its decline and ruin? There is A NATION,† in favor of which all things seem to promise a general and lasting prosperity. It has an advantageous situation, a fruitful soil, a temperate climate, an agreeable society, an easy access, a mutual generosity, an inimitable industry, quick penetration in council, heroical courage in war, incredible success in trade, surprising dexterity in arts, indisputable reputation in sciences, an amiable toleration in religion, severity blended with sweetness, sweetness tempered with severity.

Does this nation pass the bounds? At first it acquires advantages more than nature and art had given it. The boundless ambition of the

* Lucan. Pharsal. lib. i.

† This sermon was preached in 1706.

the monarch inſpires the ſubjects with a noble pride. Authority, eſtabliſhed by deſpotical power, enſlaves the judgments of all to the will of one. A treacherous policy at firſt impoſes on neighboring ſtates. Troops, impelled by a raſh valor at firſt, ſurmount all obſtacles. Toleration is baniſhed, the prince takes the place of God himſelf, and exerciſes his prerogative. Violating the faith of edicts, procures ſome preſent advantages. An inſatiable avidity adds fortreſs to fortreſs, city to city, province to province, kingdom to kingdom. But where is divine providence? Where is the truth of our text, *righteousness exalteth a nation?* What pitch of grandeur can religion obtain for a people, which cannot be obtained by other means?

Stop. The objection made to our doctrine demonſtrates the truth of it. The ambition of the monarch, communicated to his ſubjects, will there produce all the fatal effects of ambition. Deſpotical power, which enſlaved the judgments of all to the abſolute will of one, will cauſe the judgments of all to reſiſt the will of one. That deceitful policy, which took neighboring ſtates by ſurprize, will inſpire them with diſtruſt and precaution. Troops hurried on by raſhneſs will find out that raſhneſs is the high road to defeat. Toleration diſallowed will diſaffect the hearts of faithful ſubjects, and induſtry will flee to foreign climes. The violation of edicts will deſtroy confidence in all the public inſtruments of government. An inſatiable avidity of territorial acquiſitions, of poſſeſſing forts, cities, provinces, and kingdoms without number, will require more attention and greater expenſe than any nation can furniſh. A ſtate in this condition, will ſink under the weight of its own grandeur, it will be attenuated by being expanded, and, if I may uſe ſuch an expreſſion, impoveriſhed by its abundance. Each paſſion

put

put in motion will give a ſhock peculiar to itſelf, and all together will unite in one general blow fatal to the edifice, which they had erected. A prince, by becoming an object of the admiration of the world, becomes at the ſame time an object of jealouſy, ſuſpicion, and terror. Hence come civil commotions and foreign wars. Hence the forming of leagues, and deep-concerted plots. Hence mortality, ſcarcity, and famine. Hence heaven and earth in concert againſt a ſtate, that ſeemed to defy both earth and heaven. Hence an eternal example to juſtify providence in all future ages, and to demonſtrate to the moſt obſtinate the doctrine of the text, that only rectitude can procure ſubſtantial glory.

Thus, we think, we have ſufficiently eſtabliſhed our prophet's propoſition: and we will finiſh the arguments, by which we have ſupported it, by giving you the character of that author, who hath taken the greateſt pains to ſubvert it.* He was one of thoſe inconſiſtent men, whom the fineſt genius cannot preſerve from ſelf-contradiction, and whoſe oppoſite qualities will always leave us in doubt, whether to place them in one extreme, or in another diametrically oppoſite. On the one hand, he was a great philoſopher, and knew how to diſtinguiſh truth from falſehood, for he could ſee at once a connection of principles, and a train of conſequences: on the other hand, he was a great ſophiſter, always endeavoring to confound truth with falſehood, to wreſt principles, and to force conſequences. In one view, admirably learned and of fine parts, having profited much by the labors of others, and more by the exerciſe of his own great ſenſe: in another view, ignorant, or affecting to be ignorant, of the moſt common things, advancing arguments which had been a thouſand

* Mr. Bayle.

thousand times refuted, and starting objections which the greatest novice in the schools durst not have mentioned without blushing. On the one hand, attacking the greatest men, opening a wide field for them to labor in, leading them into devious and rugged paths, and, if not going beyond them, giving them a world of pains to keep pace with him: on the other hand, quoting the meanest geniuses, offering a profusion of incense to them, blotting his writings with names that had never been pronounced by learned lips. On the one hand, free, at least in appearance, from every disposition contrary to the spirit of the gospel, chaste in his manners, grave in his conversation, temperate in his diet, and austere in his usual course of life: on the other, employing all the acuteness of his genius to oppose good morals, and to attack chastity, modesty, and all other christian virtues. Sometimes appealing to a tribunal of the most rigid orthodoxy, deriving arguments from the purest sources, and quoting divines of the most unsuspected soundness in the faith: at other times, travelling in the high road of heretics, reviving the objections of ancient heresiarchs, forging them new armor, and uniting in one body the errors of past ages with those of the present time. O that this man, who was endowed with so many talents, may have been forgiven by God, for the bad use he made of them! May that Jesus, whom he so often attacked, have expiated his crimes! But, though charity constrains us to hope and wish for his salvation, the honor of our holy religion obliges us publicly to declare that he abused his own understanding, to protest before heaven and earth that we disown him as a member of our reformed churches, and that we shall always consider a part of his writings as a scandal to good men, and as a pest of the church.

We return to our prophet. Let us employ a few

few moments in reflecting on the truths we have heard. Thanks be to God, my brethren, we have better means of knowing the *righteousness* that *exalts a nation*, and more motives to practiſe it, than all the nations, of whoſe glory we have been hearing. They had only a ſuperficial, debaſed, confuſed knowledge of the virtues, which conſtitute ſubſtantial grandeur: and, as they held errors in religion, they muſt neceſſarily have erred in civil polity. God, glory be to his name! hath placed at the head of our councils the moſt perfect legiſlator, that ever held the reins of government in the world. This legiſlator is Jeſus Chriſt. *His kingdom*, indeed, *is not of this world*, but the rules he has given us to arrive at that, are proper to render us happy in the preſent ſtate. When he ſays, *Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added to you*, Matt. vi. 33. he gives the command, and makes the promiſe to whole nations as well as to individuals.

Who ever carried ſo far as this divine legiſlator ideas of the virtues, of which we have been treating in ſeveral parts of this diſcourſe, and by practiſing which *nations are exalted?* Who ever formed ſuch juſt notions of that benevolence, that love of ſocial good, that generoſity to enemies, that contempt of life, that wiſdom, that veneration for noble exploits, that docility and frugality, that devotedneſs to public uſe, that diſtance from falſe glory, that magnanimity, and all the other virtues, which render antiquity venerable to us? Who ever gave ſuch wiſe inſtructions to kings and ſubjects, magiſtrates and people, lawyers and merchants, ſoldiers and ſtateſmen, the world and the church? We know theſe virtues better than any other people in the world. We are able to carry our glory far beyond Egyptians and Perſians, Aſſyrians and Medes, Lacedemonians, Athenians, and Romans;

mans; if not that sort of glory, which glares and dazzles, at least that, which makes tranquil and happy, and procures a felicity far more agreeable than all the pageantry of heroism and worldly splendor.

Christians, let not these be mere speculations to us. Let us endeavor to reduce them to practice. Never let us suffer our political principles to clash with the principles of our religion. Far from us, and far from us for ever, be the abominable maxims of that pernicious Florentine,* who gave statesmen such fatal lessons as these: A prince, who would maintain his dignity, ought to learn not to be virtuous, when affairs of state require him to practise vice; he ought to be frugal with his own private fortune, and liberal with public money; he ought never to keep his word to his own disadvantage; he ought not so much to aspire at virtue as at the semblance of it; he ought to be apparently merciful, faithful, sincere and religious, but really the direct opposite; that he cannot possibly practise what are accounted virtues in other men, because necessity of state will often oblige him to act contrary to charity, humanity and religion; he ought to yield to the various changes of fortune, to do right as often as he can, but not to scruple doing wrong when need requires.—I say again, far from us be these abominable maxims! Let us obey the precepts of Jesus Christ, and by so doing let us draw down blessings on this nation more pure and perfect than those which we now enjoy.

The blessings we now enjoy, and which providence bestowed on us so abundantly a few days ago,† should inspire us with lasting gratitude; however, my brethren, they are not, they ought not to be, the full accomplishment of our wishes.

* Machiavel. Princ. xv. xvi. xvii.

† At the battle of Ramillies, May 23, 1706.

Such laurels as we aſpire at, are not gathered in fields of battle. The path to that eminence, to which we travel, is not covered with human gore. The acclamations we love, are not excited by wars, and rumors of wars, the clangor of arms, and the ſhoutings of armed men.

Were our pleaſure, though not of the pureſt ſort, perfect in its own kind, we ſhould experience a riſe in happineſs! But can we enjoy our victories, without mourning for the miſeries which procured them! Our triumphs indeed abaſe and confound our enemies, and make them lick the duſt; yet theſe very triumphs preſent one dark ſide to us. Witneſs the many wounds, which I ſhould make a point of not opening, were it not a relief to mourners to hear of their ſufferings; were it not equitable to declare to thoſe, whoſe ſorrows have procured our joy, that we remember them, that we are concerned for them, that we ſympathize with them, that we are not ſo taken up with public joy as to forget private woe. Witneſs, I ſay, ſo many deſolate houſes among us. Witneſs this mourning in which ſo many of us appear to-day. Witneſs theſe affectionate Joſephs, who lament the death of their parents. Witneſs theſe Marys and Marthas, weeping at the tomb of Lazarus. Witneſs theſe diſtreſſed Davids, who weep as they go, and exclaim, *O Abſalom, my ſon! my ſon Abſalom! would God I had died for thee! O Abſalom, my ſon, my ſon!* 2 Sam. xviii. 33. Witneſs theſe Rachels, who make Rama echo with their cries, *refuſing to be comforted, because their children are not*, Jer. xxxi. 15.

My dear brethren, on whom the hand of God is heavy, ye ſorrowful Naomis, ye melancholy *Maras, with whom the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly*, Ruth i. 20. we ſhare your griefs, we mix our tears with yours, we feel all the blows

that

that ſtrike you. O fatal victory! O bloody glory! you are not fruits of *righteousness*.

Chriſtians, if our joy be mixed, it is becauſe our *righteousness* is mixed. Let us not ſearch for our misfortunes in any other cauſe. Let us do, when any thing is wanting to complete our joy, what the ancient people of God did, whenever they were conquered. The congregation was aſſembled, the ephod was put on, the oracle was conſulted, inquiſition was made from tribe to tribe, from family to family, from houſe to houſe, from perſon to perſon, who it was, whoſe ſin had cauſed the loſs of the victory, or the loſs of a regiment, and when he was diſcovered he was put to death. Joſhua, after he had met with a repulſe before Ai, and had loſt thirty-ſix men, rent his garments, and lay on his face upon the earth before the ark of the Lord. In like manner, let us, my brethren, at the remembrance of infected countries, fields of battle covered with carcaſes, rivers of blood dying the ſoil, confuſed heaps of dead and dying fellow-creatures, new globes of fire flying in the air, let us examine ourſelves. Happy, if, as in the caſe juſt now mentioned, only one criminal could be found among many thouſands of innocent perſons! Alas! we are obliged, on the contrary, to lament, that there is hardly one innocent among thouſands of the guilty.

Where is the Achan, who imbitters the glorious and immortal victories, which God grants to Iſrael? What tribe, what family, what houſe, ſhall be taken? Is it the magiſtrate? Is it the people? Is it the paſtor? Is it the flock? Is it the merchant? Is it the ſoldier? Ah! my brethren! do you not hear the oracle of the Lord anſwering from the terrible tribunal erected in your own conſciences? It is the magiſtrate; it is the people; it is the paſtor; it is the flock; it is the merchant; it is the ſoldier.

It

It is that *magistrate*, who, being required to have always before his eyes that God, *by whom kings reign*, and that throne, before which the greatest monarchs of the world must be judged, is dazzled with his own grandeur, governed by a worldly policy, and hath more at heart to enforce the observation of his own capricious orders, than those rules of eternal rectitude, which secure the safety and happiness of a nation.

It is that *people*, who, instead of considering the felicity of *that nation whose God is the Lord*, are attempting to be happy independently of God; choosing rather to sacrifice to blind chance, than to him who is the *happy God*, and who alone dispenses prosperous and adverse circumstances.

It is that *minister*, who, instead of confining his attention to the discharge of all the duties of his office, performs only such parts as acquire him a popular reputation, neglecting private duties, such as friendly and affectionate remonstrances, paternal advice, private charities, secret visits, which characterize the true ministers of the gospel.

It is that *congregation*, which, instead of regarding the word dispensed by us as the word of God, licentiously turns all public ministrations into ridicule, and under pretence of ingenuity and freedom of thought, encourages infidelity and irreligion; or, at best, imagines that religion consists more in hearing and knowing than in practice and obedience.

It is that *soldier*, who, though he is always at war with death, marching through fire and flames, hearing nothing but the sound of warlike instruments crying to him with a loud and dreadful voice, *remember, you must die!* yet frames a morality of his own, and imagines, that his profession, so proper in itself to incline him to obey the maxims of the gospel, serves to free him from all obligation to obedience.

Ah!

Ah! this it is, which obſcures our brighteſt triumphs; this ſtains our laurels with blood; this excites lamentations, and mixes them with our ſongs of praiſe. Let us ſcatter theſe dark clouds. Let us purify our righteouſneſs in order to purify our happineſs. Let religion be the bridle, the rule, the ſoul of all our councils; and ſo may it procure us unalterable peace, and unmixed pleaſure! or rather, as there is no ſuch pleaſure on earth, as imperfection is a character eſſential to human affairs, let us elevate our hearts and minds to nobler objects, let us ſigh after happier periods, and let each of us ſeek true glory in the enjoyment of God. God grant us this grace! To him be honor and glory for ever, Amen.

SERMON X.

CHRISTIAN HEROISM.

PROVERBS xvi. 32.

He that ruleth his spirit, is better than he that taketh a city.

WERE we to judge of these words by the first impressions they make on the mind, we should place them among such hyperbolical propositions as imagination forms to color and exceed truth. The mind on some occasions is so struck as to magnify the object in contemplation. The more susceptible people are of lively impressions, the more subject they are to declamation and hyperbole. We find these maxims sometimes necessary in explaining the sacred authors. Were we to adhere scrupulously to their words, we should often mistake their meaning, and extend their thoughts beyond due bounds. The people of the east seldom express themselves with precision. A cloud intercepting a few rays of light is the *sun darkened:* A meteor in the air is *the powers of the heavens shaken:* Jonah in the belly of the fish is a man *down at the bottom of the mountains:* Thunder is the *voice of Jehovah, powerful and full of majesty, dividing flames of fire, breaking cedars of Lebanon, making Syrians skip, and stripping forests bare:* A swarm of insects is *a nation set in battle array, marching every one on his ways, not breaking their ranks, besieging a city, having the teeth of a lion, and the cheek teeth of a great lion,* Joel i. 6. and ii. 7, 9.

If we be ever authorized to solve a difficult text, by examining the license of hyperbolical style: if ever it be necessary to reduce hyperbole to precision, is it not so now in explaining the

text

text before us? *He that ruleth his spirit, is better than he that taketh a city.* What juſtneſs can there be in comparing a man, who by reflection corrects his paſſions, with an hero, who, in virtue of concerted plans, great fatigues, ſpending days and nights on horſeback, ſurmounting difficulties, enduring heats and colds, braving a variety of dangers, at laſt arrives, by marching through a ſhower of ſhot darkening the air, to cut through a ſquadron, to ſcale a wall, and to hoiſt his flag in a conquered city?

But however juſt this commentary may appear, you will make no uſe of it here, unleſs you place chriſtianity in the exerciſe of eaſy virtues, and after the example of moſt men, accommodate religion to your paſſions inſtead of reforming your paſſions by religion. Endeavor to form principles, reſiſt faſhion and cuſtom, eradicate prejudice, undertake the conqueſt of yourſelf, carry fire and ſword into the moſt ſenſible part of your ſoul, enter the liſts with your darling ſin, *mortify your members which are upon earth*, riſe above fleſh and blood, nature, and ſelf-love, and, to ſay all in one word, endeavor to *rule your ſpirit*; and you will find, that Solomon hath rigorouſly obſerved the laws of preciſion, that he hath ſpoken the language of logic and not of oratory, and that there is not a ſhadow of hyperbole or exaggeration in this propoſition, *He that ruleth his ſpirit, is better than he that taketh a city.*

But to what period ſhall we refer the explication of the text? We will make meditation ſupply the place of experience, and we will eſtabliſh a truth, which the greateſt part of you have not experienced, and which perhaps you never will experience. This is the deſign of this diſcourſe. Our ſubject is true heroiſm, the real hero.

I enter into the matter. The word *heroism* is borrowed of the heathens. They called thoſe

men

men heroes, whom a remainder of modesty and religion prevented their putting into the number of their gods, but who for the glory of their exploits were too great to be enrolled among mere men. Let us purify this idea. The man, of whom Solomon speaks, *he who ruleth his spirit*, ought not to be confounded with the rest of mankind; he is a man transformed by grace, one, who, to use the language of scripture, is a *partaker of the divine nature*. We are going to speak of this man, and we will first describe him, and next set forth his magnanimity, or, to keep to the text, we will first explain what it is to *rule the spirit*, and, secondly, we will prove, that *he, that ruleth his spirit, is better than he, that taketh a city*. If we proceed further, it will only be to add a few reflections tending to convince you, that you are all called to heroism; that there is no middle way in religion; that you must of necessity, either bear the shame and infamy of being mean and dastardly souls, or be crowned with the glory of heroes.

I. Let us first explain the words of the text, *to rule the spirit*. Few words are more equivocal in the sacred language than this which our interpreters have rendered *spirit*. It is put in different places for the thoughts of the *mind*, the passions of the *heart*, the emotions of *sense*, phantoms of *imagination*, and illusions of *concupiscence*. We will not trouble you with grammatical dissertations. In our idiom, *to rule the spirit*, (and this is precisely the idea of Solomon) *to rule the spirit* is never to suffer oneself to be prejudiced by false ideas, always to see things in their true point of view, to regulate our hatred and our love, our desires and our inactivity, exactly according to the knowledge we have obtained after mature deliberation, that objects are worthy of our esteem, or deserve our aversion, that they are worth obtaining, or proper to be neglected. But,

But, as this manner of ſpeaking, *to rule the ſpirit*, ſuppoſes exerciſe, pains, labors, and reſiſtance, we ought not to confine ourſelves to the general idea which we have given. We conſider man in three points of light; in regard to his natural diſpoſitions; in regard to the objects that ſurround him; and in regard to the habits which he hath contracted.

I. Conſider the *natural diſpoſitions* of man. Man, as ſoon as he is in the world, finds himſelf the ſlave of his heart, inſtead of being maſter of it. I mean, that inſtead of a natural facility to admit only what is true, and to love only what is amiable, he feels, I know not what, interior power, which diſpoſes him to truth and virtue, and conciliates him to vice and falſehood.

I am not going to agitate the famous queſtion of free-will, nor to enter the liſts with thoſe, who are noted in the church for the hereſy of denying the doctrine of human depravity; nor will I repeat all the arguments, good and bad, which are alledged againſt it. If there be a ſubject, in which we ought to have no implicit faith, either in thoſe who deny, or in thoſe who affirm; if there be a ſubject, in the diſcuſſion of which, they who embrace the ſide of error advance truth, and they who embrace the ſide of truth advance falſehoods, this is certainly the ſubject. But we will not litigate this doctrine. We will alledge here only one proof of our natural depravity, that ſhall be taken from experience, and, for evidence of this fatal truth, we refer each of you to his own feelings.

Is virtue to be practiſed? Who does not feel, as ſoon as he is capable of obſerving, an inward power of reſiſtance? By virtue, here I underſtand an univerſal diſpoſition of an intelligent ſoul to devote itſelf to order, and to regulate its conduct as order requires. Order demands, that,

when

when I suffer, I should submit myself to the mighty hand of God, which afflicts me. When I am in prosperity, order requires me to acknowledge the bounty of my benefactor. If I possess talents superior to those of my neighbor, order requires me to use them for the glory of him from whom I received them. If I am obliged to acknowledge, that my neighbor hath a richer endowment than I, order requires me to acquiesce with submission, and to acknowledge with humility this difference of endowment: should I revolt with insolence, or dispute through jealousy or self-love, I should act disorderly.

What I affirm of virtue, that it is a general disposition, that I affirm also in regard to an indisposition to sin. To avoid vice is to desist alike from every thing contrary to order, from slander and anger, from indolence and voluptuousness, and so on.

He, who forms such ideas of the obligations of men, will have too many reasons to acknowledge, by his own inward feelings and experience, that we bring into the world with us propensities hostile and fatal to such obligations. Some of these are in the body; others in the mind.

Some are in the *body*. Who is there, that finds in his senses, that suppleness and readiness of compliance with a volition, which is itself directed by laws of order? Who does not feel his constitution rebel against virtue? I am not speaking now of such men as brutally give themselves up to their senses, who consult no other laws than the revolutions of their own minds, and who, having abandoned for many years the government of their souls to the humors of their bodies, have lost all dominion over their senses. I speak of such as have the most sincere desire to hear and obey the laws of order. How often does a tender and charitable soul find in a body, subject to violence and anger, obstacles against the

the exercise of its charity and tenderness? How often does a soul, penetrated with respect for the laws of purity, find in a body, rebellious against this virtue, terrible obstacles, to which it is in a manner constrained to yield?

Disorder is not only in the body; the *soul* is in the same condition. Consult yourselves in regard to such virtues, and vices as are, so to speak, altogether spiritual, and have no relation, or a very distant one, to matter, and you will find you brought into the world an indisposition to some of these virtues, and an inclination to the opposite vices. For example, avarice is one of these spiritual vices, having only a very distant relation to matter. I do not mean, that avarice does not incline us toward sensible objects, I only say, that it is passion less seated in the material than in the spiritual part of man; it rises rather out of reflections of the mind than out of motions of the body. Yet how many people are born sordid; people always inclined to amass money, and to whom the bare thought of giving, or parting with any thing, gives pain; people who prove, by the very manner in which they exercise the laws of generosity, that they are naturally inclined to violate them; people who never give except by constraint, who tear away, as it were, what they bestow on the necessities of the poor; and who never cut off those dear parts of themselves without taking the most affectionate leave of them? Envy and jealousy are dispositions of the kind, which we call spiritual. They have their seat in the soul. There are many persons, who acknowledge the injustice and baseness of these vices, and who hate them, and who nevertheless are not sufficient masters of themselves to prevent the dominion of them, at least to prevent a repetition of them, and not to find sometimes their own misery in the prosperity of other persons.

As

As we feel in our conſtitution obſtacles to virtue, and propenſities to vice, ſo we perceive alſo inclinations to error, and obſtacles to truth. Theſe things are cloſely connected; for if we find within us natural obſtacles to virtue, we find, for that very reaſon, natural obſtacles to truth; and if we be born with propenſities to vice, we are born on that very account prone to error. Strictly ſpeaking, all ideas of vice may be referred to one, that is to error. Every vice, every irregular paſſion openly or tacitly implies a falſehood. Every vice, every irregular paſſion includes this error, that a man, who gratifies his paſſion, is happier than he, who reſtrains and moderates it. Now, every man judging in this manner, whether he do ſo openly or covertly, takes the ſide of error. If we be then naturally inclined to ſome vices, we are naturally inclined to ſome errors, I mean, to admit that falſe principle, on which the irregular paſſion eſtabliſheth the vice it would commit, the deſire of gratification. An impaſſionate man is not free to diſcern truth from falſehood, at leaſt, he cannot without extreme conſtraint diſcern the one from the other. He is inclined to fix his mind on whatever favors his paſſion, changes its nature, and diſguiſes vice in the habit of virtue; and, to ſay all in one word, he is impelled to fix his mind on whatever makes truth appear falſe, and falſehood true.

I conclude, the diſpoſition of mind, of which Solomon ſpeaks, and which he deſcribes by *ruling the ſpirit*, ſuppoſes labor, conſtraint, and exerciſe. A man, who would acquire this noble diſpoſition of mind, a man, who would *rule his ſpirit*, muſt, in ſome ſort, re-create himſelf; he finds himſelf at once, if I may be allowed to ſay ſo, at war with nature; his body muſt be formed anew; his humors and his ſpirits muſt be turned into another channel; violence muſt be done to all the powers of his ſoul. 2.

2. Having considered man in regard to his natural dispositions, observe him, secondly, in regard to *surrounding objects*. Here you will obtain a second exposition of Solomon's words, *He, that ruleth his spirit*; you will have a second class of evidences of that exercise, labor, and constraint, which true heroism supposes. Society is composed of many enemies, who seem to be taking pains to increase those difficulties, which our natural dispositions oppose against truth and virtue.

Examine the members of this society among whom we are appointed to live, consult their ideas, hear their conversation, weigh their reasonings, and you will find almost every where, false judgments, errors, mistakes, and prejudices: prejudices of birth, taken from our parents, the nurses who suckled us, the people who made the habits, in which we were wrapped in our cradles: prejudices of education, taken from the masters, to whom the care of our earliest days was committed, from some false ideas, which they had imbibed in their youth, and from other illusions which they had created themselves: prejudices of country, taken from the genius of the people among whom we have lived, and, so to speak, from the very air we have breathed: prejudices of religion, taken from our catechists, from the divines we have consulted, from the pastors by whom we have been directed, from the sect we have embraced: prejudices of friendship, taken from the connections we have had, and the company we have kept: prejudices of trade and profession, taken from the mechanical arts we have followed, or the abstract sciences we have studied: prejudices of fortune, taken from the condition of life in which we have been, either among the noble or the poor. This is only a small part of the canals, by which error is conveyed to us. What efforts must a man make, what pains

must he take with himself, to preserve himself from contagion, to hold his soul perpetually in equilibrium, to keep all the gates of error shut, and incessantly to maintain, amidst so many prejudices, that freedom of judgment, which weighs argument against objection, objection against argument, which deliberately examines all that can be advanced in favor of a proposition, and all that can be said against it, which considers an object in every point of view, and which makes us determine only as we are constrained by the irresistible authority, and by the soft violence of truth, demonstration, and evidence?

As the men, who surround us, fascinate us by their errors, so they decoy us into vice by their example. In all places, and in all ages, virtue had fewer partizans than vice: in all ages and in all places, the friends of virtue were so few in comparison of the partizans of vice, that the saints complained, that the earth was not inhabited by men of the first kind, and that the whole world was occupied by the latter, "the godly man ceaseth; the faithful fail from among the children of men. The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men; to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no not one," Psal. xii. 1. and xiv. 2, 3. An exaggeration of the prophet, I grant, but an exaggeration for which the universality of human depravity hath given too much occasion. Cast your eyes attentively on society, you will be, as our prophet was, astonished at the great number of the partizans of vice; you will be troubled, as he was, to distinguish in the crowd any friends of virtue; and you will find yourself inclined to say, as he said, *there is none that doeth good, no not one.*

But

But how difficult is it to resist example, and *to rule the spirit* among such a number of tyrants, who aim only to enslave it! In order to resist example, we must incessantly oppose those natural inclinations, which urge us to imitation. To resist example, we must not suffer ourselves to be dazzled either with the number, or the splendor of such as have placed vice on a throne. To resist example, we must brave persecution, and all the inconveniences, to which worldly people never fail to expose them, who refuse to follow them down the precipice. To resist example, we must love virtue for virtue's sake. To resist example, we must transport ourselves into another world, imagine ourselves among those holy societies, who surround the throne of a holy God, who make his excellencies the continual matter of their adoration and homage, and who fly at the first signal of his hand, the first breath of his mouth. What a work, what a difficult work for you, poor mortal, whose eyes are always turned toward the earth, and whom your own involuntary and insurmountable weight incessantly carries downward!

3. Finally, we must acknowledge what labor, pains and resistance, the disposition, of which Solomon speaks, requires, if we consider man in regard to the *habits* which he hath contracted. As soon as we enter into the world, we find ourselves impelled by our natural propensities, stunned with the din of our passions, and, as I just now said, seduced by the errors, and carried away by the examples, of our companions. Seldom in the first years of life, do we surmount that natural bias, and that power of example, which impel us to false hood and sin. Most men have done more acts of vice than of virtue, consequently, in the course of a certain number of years, we contribute by our way of living to join to the depravity of nature that which comes from exercise and habit.

bit. A man, who would *rule his spirit*, is then required to eradicate the habits which have taken poſſeſſion of him. What a taſk!

What a taſk, when we endeavor to prevent the return of ideas, which for many years our minds have revolved! What a taſk, to defend one's ſelf from a paſſion which knows all the avenues of the mind, and how to facilitate acceſs by means of the body! What a taſk, to turn away from the flattering images, and ſeducing ſolicitations of concupiſcence long accuſtomed to gratification! What a taſk, when we are obliged to make the greateſt efforts in the weakeſt part of life, and to ſubdue an enemy, whom we have been always uſed to conſider as unconquerable, and whom we never durſt attack, when he had no other arms than what we choſe to give him, and enjoyed no other advantages than ſuch as we thought proper to allow! Such labor, ſuch pains and conſtraint, muſt he experience, who acquires the art of *ruling his ſpirit!* Now then, as we have explained this diſpoſition of mind, let us aſſign the place which is due to him who hath it. Having given an idea of real heroiſm, we muſt diſplay the grandeur of it, and prove the propoſition in my text, *He that ruleth his ſpirit, is better than he that taketh a city.*

II. For this purpoſe, it is not neceſſary to obſerve, that, by *him that taketh a city*, Solomon does not mean a man, who from principles of virtue, to defend his country and religion, hazards his life and liberty in a juſt war: in this view, *he that taketh a city, and he that ruleth his ſpirit*, is one and the ſame man. Solomon intends conquerors, who live, if I may expreſs myſelf ſo, upon victories and conqueſts; he intends heroes, ſuch as the world conſiders them.

Neither is it neceſſary preciſely to fix the bounds of this general expreſſion, *is better. He that ruleth his ſpirit, is better than he that taketh a city.*

city. The ſenſe is eaſily underſtood: in general, it ſignifies, that *he that ruleth his ſpirit*, diſcovers more fortitude, more magnanimity, and more courage, that he hath more juſt ideas of glory, and is more worthy of eſteem and praiſe, than they who are called in the world conquerors and heroes.

We will prove this propoſition by comparing the hero of the world with the chriſtian hero, and we will confine the compariſon to four articles: Firſt, the motives which animate them: ſecondly, the exploits they perform: thirdly, the enemies they attack: and laſtly, the rewards they obtain. *He that taketh a city*, is animated with motives mean and worldly, which degrade an intelligent ſoul, even while they ſeem to elevate it to a pinnacle of grandeur and glory: but *he that ruleth his ſpirit*, is animated by motives grand, noble and ſublime, every way ſuited to the excellence of our nature. *He that ruleth his ſpirit*, is capable of all the exploits of *him that taketh a city*: but *he that taketh a city*, is not capable of the exploits of *him that ruleth his ſpirit*. *He that taketh a city*, attacks an exterior enemy, to whom he hath no attachment: but *he that ruleth his ſpirit*, attacks an enemy who is dear to him, and hath the greatneſs of ſoul to turn his arms againſt himſelf. In fine, *he that taketh a city*, is crowned only by idiots, who have no juſt notions of grandeur and heroiſm: but *he that ruleth his ſpirit*, will be crowned with the hands of the only juſt appraiſer, and diſpenſer of glory. Theſe are four titles of ſuperiority, which the chriſtian hero hath over the falſe hero: four ſources of proofs to eſtabliſh the propoſition in our text, *He that ruleth his ſpirit, is better than he that taketh a city.*

1. Let us conſider the *motives*, which animate a conqueror *that taketh a city*, and the motives which animate a man that obtains *rule over his*

spirit: the motives of the true hero, with the motives of the false hero. What are the motives of a false hero? What spirit animates him, when he undertakes to conquer a city? This is one of the questions which sinful passions have most obscured. Truth is disguised in epistles dedicatory, and in profane eulogiums, yea sometimes in religious discourses. The majesty of a victorious general, the glory of a conqueror, the pompous titles of victor, arbiter of peace, arbiter of war, have so dazzled us, and in some sort so perverted the powers of our soul, that we cannot form just notions of this subject. Hear pure nature, formerly speaking by the mouth of a nation, who were the more wise for not being civilized by the injustice of our laws and customs. I speak of the ancient Scythians. The most famous taker of cities came to their cabins and caverns. He had already subdued his fellow citizens and neighbors. Already Thebes and Athens, Thrace and Thessaly, had submitted to his arms. Already, Greece being too small a sphere of action for him, he had penetrated even into Persia, passed the famous Phrygian river, where he slew six hundred thousand men, reduced Caria and Judea, made war with Darius and conquered him, performed exploits more than human, and in spite of nature, besieged and took Tyre, the most famous siege recorded in ancient history, subjugated the Mardi and Bactrians, attained the mountains Caucasus and Oxus, and, in a word, conquered more countries, and enslaved more people, than we can describe, or even mention within the limits allotted to this exercise. This man arrives in Scythia. The Scythians sent deputies to him, who thus addressed him. "Had the gods given you a body proportioned to your ambition, the whole universe would have been too little for you: with one hand you will have touched the east, and with the other the west,

weſt, and, not content with this, you would have followed the ſun, and have ſeen where he hides himſelf. Whatever you are, you are aſpiring at what you can never obtain. From Europe you run into Aſia: and from Aſia back you run again into Europe, and having enſlaved all mankind, you attack rivers, and foreſts, and wild beaſts. What have you to do with us? We have never ſet foot in your country. May not a people, living in a deſert, be allowed to be ignorant of who you are, and whence you come? You boaſt of having exterminated robbers, and you yourſelf are the greateſt robber in the world. You have pillaged and plundered all nations, and now you come to rob us of our cattle. It is in vain to fill your hands, for you are always in ſearch of freſh prey. Of what uſe are your boundleſs riches, except to irritate your eternal thirſt? You are the firſt man, who ever experienced ſuch extreme want in the midſt of ſuch abundance. All you have, ſerves only to make you deſire with more fury what you have not. If you be a God, do good to mankind: but if you be only an inſignificant mortal, think of what you are, and remember, that it is a great folly to occupy things, which make us forget ourſelves."* Theſe are the motives, which animate the heroes of the world; theſe are the ſentiments, which are diſguiſed under the fine names of glory, valor, greatneſs of ſoul, heroiſm. An inſatiable avidity of riches, an invincible pride, a boundleſs ambition, a total forgetfulneſs of what is, what ought to be, and what muſt be hereafter.

The motives of him, who endeavors to render himſelf maſter of his own heart, are love of order, deſire of freedom from the ſlavery of the paſſions, a noble firmneſs of ſoul, which admits only

* Quintus Curtius, lib. vii. chap. 8.

only what appears true, and loves only what appears lovely, after ſober and ſerious diſcuſſion. In this firſt view, then, the advantage is wholly in favor of *him, that ruleth his ſpirit, is better than he, that taketh a city.*

2. Compare, in the ſecond place, the *exploits of him that ruleth his ſpirit*, with the exploits of *him, that taketh a city.* He, who is capable of *ruling his ſpirit*, is capable of all that is great and noble in *him, that taketh a city:* but *he, that taketh a city*, is not capable of all that is great and magnanimous in *him, that ruleth his ſpirit.* I will explain myſelf.

What is there great and magnanimous in a hero that taketh a city? Patience to endure fatigue, to ſurmount difficulties, to ſuffer contradiction: intrepidity in the moſt frightful dangers: preſence of mind in the moſt violent and painful exerciſes: unſhaken firmneſs in ſight of a near and terrible diſſolution. Theſe are diſpoſitions of mind, I grant, which ſeem to elevate man above humanity: but a chriſtian hero is capable of all this, I ſpeak ſincerely, and without a figure. A man, who hath obtained a religious freedom of mind, who always preſerves this liberty, who always weighs good and evil, who believes only what is true, and does only what is right; who hath always his eye upon his duty, or, as the pſalmiſt expreſſeth it, who *ſets the Lord always before him*, ſuch a man is capable, literally capable, of all you admire in a worldly hero. No difficulty diſcourages him, no contradiction diſconcerts him, no fatigue ſtops him, no dangers affright him, no pain but he can bear, no appearance of death ſhocks him into paleneſs, and fear, and flight. Our women and children, our confeſſors and martyrs, have literally performed greater exploits of fortitude, patience, courage, and conſtancy, in convents, priſons, and dungeons, at ſtakes, and on ſcaffolds, than Alexanders

anders and Cæsars in all their lives. And where is the hero of this world, who hath performed so many actions of courage and magnanimity in sieges and battles, as our confessors have for thirty years on board the gallies? The former were supported by the presence of thousands of witnesses: the latter had no spectators but God, and their own consciences. The christian hero is capable then of all that is great in the hero of the world. But the worldly hero is incapable of performing such exploits as the christian hero performs; and he knows perfectly, that his heroism doth not conduct him so far in the path of glory. Try the strength of a worldly hero. Set him to contend with a passion. You will soon find this man, invincible before, subdued into slavery and shame. He, who was firm and fearless in sight of fire and flame, at the sound of warlike instruments, becomes feeble, mean, and enervated, by a seducing and enchanting object. Sampson defeats the Philistines: but Dalilah subdues Sampson. Sampson carries away the gates of Gaza: but Sampson sinks under the weight of his own sensuality. Hercules seeks highway robbers to combat, and monsters to subdue: but he cannot resist impurity. We find him on monuments of antiquity carrying an infant on his shoulders, an emblem of voluptuousness, stooping under that unworthy burden, and letting his club fall from his hand. There is, therefore, no declamation, no hyperbole in our proposition: the christian hero is capable of performing all the great actions performed by the hero of the world: but the hero of the world is incapable of performing such noble actions as the christian hero performs; and in this respect, *he, that ruleth his spirit, is better than he, that taketh a city.*

3. Compare *him, that taketh a city, with him that ruleth his spirit,* in regard to the *enemies,* whom they attack, and you will find in the latter

latter a third title of superiority over the former. *He, that taketh a city*, attacks an exterior enemy, who is a stranger, and often odious to him. The ambition, that fills his soul, leaves no room for compassion and pity; and, provided he can but obtain his end, no matter to him though the way be strewed with the dying and the dead, to obtain that; he travels over mountains of heads, and arms, and carcases. The tumultuous passions, which tyrannize over him, stifle the voice of nature, and deafen him to the cries of a thousand miserable wretches sacrificed to his fame.

The enemy, whom the christian combats, is his own heart: for he is required to turn his arms against himself. He must suspend all sentiments of self-love; he must become his own executioner, and, to use the ideas and expressions of Jesus Christ, he must actually *deny himself*.

Jesus Christ well knew mankind. He did not preach like some preaching novices, who, in order to incline their hearers to subdue their passions, propose the work to them as free from difficulty. Jesus Christ did not disguise the difficulties, which the man must undergo, who puts on the spirit of christianity: and I do not know whether we meet with any expression in the writings of pagan poets or philosophers, more natural, and at the same time more emphatical than this: *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself*, Matt. xvi. 24.

Not that this is literally practicable, not that man can put off himself, not that religion requires us to sacrifice to it what makes the essence and happiness of our nature: on the contrary, strictly speaking, it is sin, which makes us put off or deny what is great and noble in our essence; it is sin, which requires us to sacrifice our true happiness to it. If Jesus Christ expresses himself in this manner, it is because, when

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man is poſſeſſed with a paſſion, it is incorporated, as it were, with himſelf; it ſeems to him eſſential to his felicity; every thing troubles, and every thing puts him on the rack, when he cannot gratify it; without gratifying his paſſion, his food hath no taſte, flowers no ſmell, pleaſures no point, the ſun is dark, ſociety diſagreeable, life itſelf hath no charms. To attack a reigning paſſion is *to deny self*; and *here is the patience of the ſaints*; this is the enemy, whom the chriſtian attacks; this is the war, which he wageth. How tremulous and weak is the hand, when it toucheth a ſword to be plunged into one's own boſom! Love of order, truth, and virtue, ſupport a chriſtian hero in this almoſt deſperate undertaking.

4. In fine, compare *him, that ruleth his ſpirit, with him that taketh a city*, in regard to the *acclamations* with which they are accompanied, and the *crowns* prepared for them. Who are the authors of thoſe acclamations, with which the air reſounds the praiſe of worldly heroes? They are courtiers, poets, panegyriſts. But what! are people of this order the only perſons, who entertain juſt notions of glory; and, if they be, are they generous enough to ſpeak out? How can a ſoul wholly devoted to the will and caprice of a conqueror; how can a venal creature, who makes a market of eulogiums and praiſes, which he ſells to the higheſt bidder; how can a brutal ſoldiery determine what is worthy of praiſe or blame? Is it for ſuch people to diſtribute prizes of glory, and to aſſign heroes their rank? To be exalted by people of this ſort is a ſhame; to be crowned by their hands an infamy.

Elevate, elevate thy meditation, chriſtian ſoul, riſe into the Majeſty of the Great Supreme. Think of that ſublime Intelligence, who unites in his eſſence every thing noble and ſublime. Contemplate God, ſurrounded with angels and archangels,

archangels, cherubims and seraphims. Hear the concerts, which happy spirits perform to his glory. Hear them penetrated, ravished, charmed with the divine beauties, crying night and day, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory. Blessing and glory, wisdom, and thanksgiving, honor and power and might be unto our God for ever and ever. Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?" This being, so perfect, this being, so worthily praised, this being, so worthy of everlasting praise, this is he, who will pronounce upon true glory; this is he, who will compose the eulogium of all who aspire at it; this is he, who will one day praise in the face of heaven and earth, all those, who shall have made the noble conquests, which we have been describing.

Imagination sinks under the weight of this subject, and this object is too bright for eyes like ours: but the nature of things doth not depend on our faculty of seeing them. As God calls us to combats more than human, so he sees fit to support us by a prospect of more than human rewards. Yes, it is the Supreme Being, it is he, who will one day distribute the praises, which are due to such as have triumphed over themselves. What a spectacle! what a prospect! Yes, christian champion, after thou hast resisted flesh and blood, after thou hast been treated as a fool by mankind, after thou hast run the race of tribulation, after thou hast made thy life one perpetual martyrdom, thou shalt be called forth in the presence of men and angels, the master of the world shall separate thee from the crowd; there he will address to thee this language, *Well done, good and faithful servant;* there he will accomplish the promise, which he

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this day makes to all who fight under his standard, *he that overcometh shall sit down in my throne.* Ah! glory of worldly heroes; profane encomiums; fastidious inscriptions; proud trophies; brilliant but corruptible diadems; what are you in comparison with the acclamations which await the christian hero, and the crowns which God, the rewarder, prepares for him.

And you, mean and timid souls, who perhaps admire these triumphs, but who have not the ambition to strive to obtain them; you soft and indolent spirits, who, without reluctance, give up all pretensions to the immortal crown, which God prepares for heroism, provided he require no account of your indolence and effeminacy, and suffer you, like brute beasts, to follow the first instincts of your nature; undeceive yourselves. I said at the beginning, you are all called to heroism; there is no midway in religion; you must be covered with shame and infamy along with the base and timid, or crowned with glory in company with heroes. The duty of an intelligent soul is to adhere to truth, and to follow virtue; we bring into the world with us obstacles to both; our duty is to surmount them; without this we betray our trust; we do not answer the end of our creation; we are guilty, and we shall be punished for not endeavoring to obtain the great end for which we are created.

Let this be the great principle of our divinity and morality. Let us invariably retain it. Let us not lose ourselves in discussions and researches into the origin of evil, and into the permission of the entrance of sin into the world. Let us not bury ourselves alive in speculations and labyrinths; let us not plunge into abysses, from which no pains can disengage us. Let us fear an ocean full of rocks, and let an idea of the shipwrecks, which so many rash people have made, stop us on the shore. Let us consider these ques-

tions less with a view to discover the perfections of the Creator in the thick darkness, under which he hath thought proper to conceal them, than in that of learning the obligations of a creature. I do not mean to decry those great geniuses, who have treated of this profound subject. Their works do honor to the human mind. They are eternal monuments to the glory of a reason, which knows how to collect its force, and to fix itself on a single object; but, it is always certain, that we cannot arrive at clear truth on this subject, except by means of thousands of distinctions and abstractions, which most of us cannot make. This subject is so delicate and refined, that most eyes are incapable of seeing it, and it is placed on an eminence so steep and inaccessible, that few geniuses can attain it.

Let us religiously abide by our principle. The duty of an intelligent soul is to adhere to truth, and to practise virtue: We are born with a disinclination to both. Our duty is to get rid of this, and without doing so we neglect the obligation of an intelligent soul, we do not answer the end, for which we were intended, we are guilty, and we shall be punished for not having answered the end of our creation.

Let us consider ourselves as soldiers placed round a besieged city, and having such or such an enemy to fight, such or such a post to force. You, you are naturally subject to violence and anger. It is sad to find in one's own constitution an opposition to virtues so lovely as those of submission, charity, sweetness, and patience. Groan under this evil: but do not despair; when you are judged, less attention will be paid to your natural indisposition to these virtues than to the efforts, which you made to get rid of it. To this point direct all your attention, and your strength, and all your courage. Say to yourself, this is the post, which my general intends I

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ſhould force; this is the enemy I am to fight with. And be you fully convinced, that one of the principal views, which God hath in preſerving your life, is, that you ſhould render yourſelf maſter of this paſſion. You, you are naturally diſpoſed to be proud. The moment you leave your mind to its natural bias, it turns to ſuch objects as ſeem the moſt fit to give you high ideas of yourſelf, to your penetration, your memory, your imagination, and even to exterior advantages, which vanity generally incorporates with the perſon who enjoys them. It is melancholy to find within yourſelf any ſeeds of an inclination, which ſo ill agree with creatures vile and miſerable as men. Lament this misfortune: but do not deſpair; to this ſide turn all your attention and all your courage and ſtrength. Say to yourſelf, this is the poſt, which my general would have me force; this is the enemy, whom he hath appointed me to oppoſe. And be fully convinced, that one of the principal views of God, in continuing you in this world, is, that you may reſiſt this paſſion, and make yourſelf maſter of it.

Let us, all together, my brethren, endeavor to rule our own ſpirits. Let us not be diſmayed at the greatneſs of the work, becauſe *greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world.* Grace comes to the aid of nature. Prayer acquires ſtrength by exerciſe. The paſſions, after having been tyrants, become ſlaves in their turn. The danger and pain of battle vaniſh, when the eye gets ſight of conqueſt. How inconceivably beautiful is victory then! God grant we may obtain it! To him be honor and glory for ever, Amen.

SERMON

SERMON XL.

GENERAL MISTAKES.

ROMANS xii. 2.

Be not conformed to this world.

OF all the diſcourſes delivered in this pulpit, thoſe, which deſerve the greateſt deference, and uſually obtain the leaſt, are ſuch as treat of general miſtakes. What ſubjects require greater deference? Our deſign in treating of them is to diſſipate thoſe illuſions, with which the whole world is familiar, which are authorized by the multitude, and which, like epidemical diſeaſes, inflicted ſometimes by providence on public bodies, involve the ſtate, the church, and individuals. Yet, are any diſcourſes leſs reſpected than ſuch as theſe? To attack general miſtakes, is, to excite the diſpleaſure of all who favor them, to diſguſt a whole auditory, and to acquire the moſt odious of all titles, I mean that of public cenſor. A preacher is then obliged to chooſe, either never to attack ſuch miſtakes as the multitude think fit to authorize, or to renounce the advantages, which he may promiſe himſelf, if he adapt his ſubjects to the taſte of his auditors, and touch their diſorders only ſo far as to accommodate their crimes to their conſciences.

Let us not heſitate what part to take. St. Paul determines us by his example. I am going to-day, in imitation of this apoſtle, to guard you againſt the rocks, where the many are ſhipwrecked. He exhorts us, in the words of the text, not to take *the world* for a model; *the world*, that is, the crowd, the multitude, ſociety at large. But what ſociety hath he in view? Is it that of ancient Rome, which he deſcribes as extreme-

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ly depraved in the beginning of this epistle? Does he say nothing of our world, our cities and provinces? We are going to examine this, and I fear I shall be able to prove to you, that our multitude is a dangerous guide to shew us the way to heaven; and, to confine ourselves to a few articles, I shall prove that they are bad guides to direct us, first, in regard to faith; secondly, in regard to the worship which God requires of us; thirdly, in regard to morality; and lastly, in regard to the hour of death. In these four views I shall enforce the words of my text, *Be not conformed to this world.* This is the whole plan of this discourse.

I. The multitude is a bad guide to direct our *faith.* We will not introduce here the famous controversy on this question, whether a great number form a presumption in favor of any religion, or whether universality be a certain evidence of the true christian church? How often has this question been debated and determined! How often have we proved against one community, which displays the number of its professors with so much parade, that, if the pretence were well founded, it would operate in favor of paganism, for pagans were always more numerous than christians! How often have we told them, that in divers periods of the ancient church, idolatry and idolaters have been enthroned in both the kingdoms of Judah and Israel! How often have we alledged, that in the time of Jesus Christ, the church was described as a *little flock*, Luke xii. 32. that heathens and Jews were all in league against christianity at first, and that the gospel had only a small number of disciples! How often have we retorted, that for whole centuries, there was no trace, no shadow, of the opinions of modern Rome! But we will not apply ourselves to this controversy to-day, by fixing your attention on the sophisms of foreigners,

perhaps we might divert your eyes from your own; by ſhewing you our triumphs over the vain attacks made on us by the enemies of the reformation, perhaps we might turn away your attention from other more dangerous wounds, which the reformed themſelves aim at the heart of religion. When I ſay the multitude is a bad guide in matters of faith, I mean, that the manner, in which moſt men adhere to truth, is not by principles, which ought to attach them to it, but by a ſpirit of negligence and prejudice.

It is no ſmall work to examine the truth, when we arrive at an age capable of diſcuſſion. The fundamental points of religion, I grant, lie in the ſcriptures clear and perſpicuous, and within the comprehenſion of all who chuſe to attend to them: but when we paſs from infancy to manhood, and arrive at an age in which reaſon ſeems mature, we find ourſelves covered with a veil, which either hides objects from us, or diſfigures them. The public diſcourſes we have heard in favor of the ſect, in which we were educated, the inveterate hatred we have for all others, who hold principles oppoſite to ours, the frightful portraits that are drawn before our eyes, of the perils we muſt encounter, if we depart from the way we have been brought up in, the impreſſions made upon us by the examples and deciſions of our parents, and maſters, and teachers, the bad taſte of thoſe, who had the care of our education, and who prevented our acquiring that moſt noble diſpoſition, without which it is impoſſible ever to be a true philoſopher, or a real chriſtian, I mean, that of ſuſpending our judgment on ſubjects not ſufficiently proved: from all this ariſe clouds, that render the truth inacceſſible, and which the world cannot diſſipate. We do not ſay, that natural talents or ſupernatural aſſiſtance are wanting; we are fully convinced that God will never give up to final error,

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any man who does all in his power to underſtand the truth. But the world are incapable of this work. Why? Becauſe all the world, except a few, hate labor and meditation in regard to the ſubjects, which reſpect another life: becauſe all the world would chooſe rather to attach themſelves to what regards their temporal intereſts, than to the great intereſt of eternal happineſs: becauſe all the world like better to ſuppoſe the principles imbibed in their childhood true, than to impoſe on themſelves the taſk of weighing them anew in the balance of a ſound and ſevere reaſon: becauſe all the world have an invincible averſion to ſuppoſe, that when they are arrived at manhood, they have almoſt loſt their time in ſome reſpects, and that when they leave ſchool they begin to be capable of inſtruction.

If the nature of the thing cannot convince you, that the multitude continue through negligence in the profeſſion of that religion, in which they were born, experience may here ſupply the place of reaſoning. There is an infinite variety of geniuſes among mankind. Propoſe to an aſſembly a queſtion, that no ſyſtem hath yet decided, and you will find, as it is uſually ſaid, as many opinions as heads.

It is certain, if mankind were attached to a religion only becauſe they had ſtudied it, we ſhould find a great number of people forſake that, in which they had been brought up, for it is impoſſible, that a whole ſociety ſhould unite in one point of error, or rather, it is clear to a demonſtration, that as truth hath certain characters ſuperior to falſehood, the temples of idols would be inſtantly deſerted, erroneous ſects would be ſoon abandoned, the religion of Jeſus Chriſt, the only one worthy of being embraced, the only one that deſerves diſciples, would be the only one embraced, and would alone be received by all ſincere diſciples of truth.

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Do not think, my brethren, that this reflection concerning that spirit of negligence, which retains most men in a profession of their own religion, regards only such communions as lay down their own infallibility for a fundamental article of faith, and which prescribe ignorance and blind submission as a first principle to their partizans, for it is but too easy to prove, that the same spirit of negligence reigns in all communities. Hence it comes to pass, that in general so few christians can render a reason for their faith. Hence it is that people are usually better furnished with arguments to oppose such societies as surround them, than with those, which establish the fundamental truths of christianity. If then you follow the direction of the multitude in the study of religion, you will be conducted by a spirit of negligence, prejudice will be held for proof, education for argument, and the decisions of your parents and teachers for infallible oracles of truth.

II. The multitude is a bad guide in regard to that *worship*, which God requireth of us, they defile it with a spirit of superstition. Superstition is a disposition of mind, that inclines us to regulate all parts of divine worship, not by just notions of the Supreme Being, nor by his relations to us, nor by what he has condescended to reveal, but by our own fancies. A superstitious man entertains fantastical ideas of God, and renders to him capricious worship; he not unfrequently takes himself for a model of God; he thinks, that what most resembles himself, however mean and contemptible, approaches nearest to perfection. We affirm, this disposition is almost universal.

It would be needless to prove this to you, my brethren, in regard to erroneous communities. Were superstition banished from the world, we should not see men, who are made in the image

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of God, disgrace their nature by prostrating themselves before idols, and marmosets, so as to render religious honors to half a block of wood or stone, the other half of which they apply to the meanest purposes: we should not see a crowd of idolaters performing a ceremonial, in which conviction of mind hath no part, and which is all external and material: we should not see a concourse of people receiving with respect, as the precious blood of the Saviour of the world, a few drops of putrified water, which the warmth of the sun hath produced by fermentation in the trunk of a decayed tree: we should not see pilgrims in procession mangling their flesh in the streets, dragging along heavy loads, howling in the highways, and, taking such absurd practices for that repentance, which breaks the heart, and transforms and renews the life. You will easily grant all this, for, I have observed, it is often less difficult to inspire you with horror for these practices, than to excite compassion in you for such as perform them.

But you ought to be informed, that there are other superstitions less gross, and therefore more dangerous. Among us we do not put a worship absolutely foreign to the purpose in the place of that, which God hath commanded and exemplified to us; but we make an estimate of the several parts of true worship. These estimates are regulated by opinions formed through prejudice or passion. What best agrees with our inclinations we consider as the essence of religion, and what would thwart and condemn them we think circumstantial.

We make a scruple of not attending a sermon, not keeping a festival, not receiving the Lord's supper; but we make none of neglecting to visit a prisoner, to comfort the sick, or to plead for the oppressed. We observe a strict decency in our religious assemblies, while our ministers address

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prayer to God, but we take no pains to accompany him with our minds and hearts, to unite our ejaculations with his, to beſiege the throne of grace. We think it a duty to join our voices with thoſe of a whole congregation, and to fill our places of worſhip with the praiſes of our Creator; but we do not think ourſelves obliged to underſtand the ſenſe of the pſalm, that is ſung with ſo much fervor, and, in the language of an apoſtle, to *sing with understanding*, 1 Cor. xiv. 15. We lay aſide innocent occupations the day before we receive the Lord's ſupper, but no ſooner do we return from that ordinance, than we allow the moſt criminal pleaſures, and enter upon the moſt ſcandalous intrigues. Who make theſe miſtakes, my brethren? Is it the few? *Be not conformed to this world*, in regard to the worſhip that God requires of you; the multitude perform it in a ſpirit of ſuperſtition.

III. Neither are the many a better guide in regard to *morality*. Here, my brethren, we are going more particularly to deſcribe that claſs of mankind, among which we live, and of which we ourſelves are a part. Indeed, the portraits we are going to draw will not be flattering to them, for juſtice requires, that we ſhould deſcribe men as they are, not as they pretend to be. In order to exactneſs, let us conſider them ſeparately and apart. Firſt, in regard to the maſters who govern them. Secondly, in regard to the profeſſions, which they exerciſe. Thirdly, in regard to ſome maxims generally received. Fourthly, in regard to the ſplendid actions, which they celebrate. And laſtly, in regard to certain deciſive occaſions, that like touchſtones, diſcover their principles and motives.

1. Conſider mankind in regard to the *maſters* who govern them. Here I congratulate myſelf on the happineſs of ſpeaking to a free people, among whom it is not reputed a crime to praiſe

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what is praise-worthy, and to blame what deserves blame, and where we may freely trace the characters of some men, of whom prudence requires us not to "speak evil, no not in thought, no not in the bed chamber, lest a bird of the air should carry the voice, and that which hath wings should tell the matter," Eccles. x. 20. Is it in the palaces of the great that humility reigns, humility which so well becomes creatures, who, though crowned and enthroned, are yet infirm, criminal, dying creatures, and who, in a few days, will become food for worms, yea, perhaps victims in the flames of hell? Is it in the palaces of the great that uprightness, good faith, and sincerity reign, yet without these society is nothing but a banditti, treaties are only snares, and laws cobwebs, which, to use a well known expression, catch only weak insects, while the free and carnivorous break through? Is it in the palaces of the great that gratitude reigns, that lawful tribute due to every motion made to procure our happiness? Is it there that the services of a faithful subject, the labors of an indefatigable merchant, the perils of an intrepid soldiery, blood shed and to be shed, are estimated and rewarded? Is it there that the cries of the wretched are heard, tears of the oppressed wiped away, the claims of truth examined and granted? Is it in the palaces of the great that benevolence reigns, that benevolence without which a man is only a wild beast? Is it there that the *young ravens which cry* are heard and fed? Psal. cxlvii. 9. Is it there that they attend to the bitter complaints of an indigent man, ready to die with hunger, and who asks for no more than will just keep him alive? Are the palaces of the great, seats of piety and devotion? Is it there that schemes are formed for the reformation of manners? Is it there that they are *grieved for the affliction of Joseph*, Amos vi. 6. and *take pleas-*

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ure in the dust and stones of Zion? Pſal. cii. 14. Is it there that we hear the praiſes of the Creator, do they celebrate the compaſſion of the Redeemer of mankind?

What ideas are excited in our minds by the names of ſuch as Caligula, Nero, Diocleſian, Decius, names deteſtable in all ages? What ideas could we excite in your minds, were we to weigh in a juſt balance the virtues of ſuch heroes as have been rendered famous by the encomiums given them? You would be aſtoniſhed to ſee that theſe men, who have been called the *delights of mankind*, have often deſerved execration, and ought to be conſidered with horror. But I purpoſely forbear, and will not put in this liſt all that ought to be placed there, that is to ſay, all thoſe who have had ſovereign power, except a very few, who, in compariſon, are next to none, and who are, as it were, loſt in the crowd among the reſt. And yet the elevation of kings makes their crimes more communicable, and their examples more contagious; their ſins become a filthy vapor infecting the air, and ſhedding their malignant influence all over our cities and families, lightning, and thundering, and diſturbing the world. Accordingly, you ſee in general, that what the king is in his kingdom, the governor is in his province; what the governor is in his province, the nobleman is in his domain; what the nobleman is in his domain, the maſter is in his family. The multitude is a bad guide, mankind are a dangerous model, conſidered in regard to the maſters who govern them.

2. Conſider the many in regard to divers *profeſſions*. What is the profeſſion of a ſoldier, particularly of an officer of rank in the army? It is to defend ſociety, to maintain religion, to be a parent to the ſoldiery, to bridle the licentiouſneſs of arms, to oppoſe power againſt injuſtice, to derive from all the views of death, that lie

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open before him, motives to prepare his accounts to produce before his judge. But what is the conduct of a soldier? Is it not to brave society? Is it not to trample upon religion? Is it not to set examples of debauchery, licentiousness, and vengeance? Is it not to let out his abilities, and to sacrifice his life to the most ambitious designs, and to the most bloody enterprizes of princes? Is it not to accustom himself to ideas of death and judgment, till he laughs at both, to stifle all remorse, and to extirpate all the fears, which such objects naturally excite in the consciences of other men?

What is the profession of a judge? It is to have no regard to the appearances of men, it is to be affable to all, who appeal to authority, to study with application the nature of a cause, which he is obliged to decide, it is patiently to go through the most fatiguing details of proofs and objections. But what is often the conduct of a judge? Is it not to be struck with the exterior difference of two parties appearing before him? Is it not to be inaccessible to the poor, to invent cruel reserves, and intolerable delays? Is it not to grovel in ignorance, and to hate study and labor?

What is the profession of a man learned in the law? It is to devote his service only to truth and justice, to plead only a good cause, to assist even those, who cannot reward his labors. What is the conduct of counsel? Is it not to support both the true and the false, and to maintain by turns both justice and iniquity? Is it not to adjust his efforts to his own glory, or to his client's ability to pay?

What is the profession of a merchant? It is to detest false weights and measures, to pay his dues, and never to found his fortune on falsehood, fraud, and perjury. But what is the conduct of a merchant? Is it not to use false

weights and measures? Is it not to cheat the state of its dues? Is it not to indulge an insatiable avidity? Is it not to enrich himself by telling untruths, by practising frauds, by taking false oaths?

What is the profession of a minister? It is to devote himself wholly to truth and virtue, to set the whole church an example, to search into hospitals, and cottages, to relieve the miseries of the sick and the poor; it is to determine himself in his studies, not by what will acquire him reputation for learning and eloquence, but by what will be most useful to the people, over whom he is set; it is to regulate his choice of subjects, not by what will make himself shine, but by what will most benefit the people among whom he exercises his ministry; it is to take as much care of a dying person in an obscure family, lying on a bed of straw, lost in oblivion and silence, as of him, who, with an illustrious name, lives amidst silver and gold, and for whom the most magnificent and pompous funeral honors will be prepared; it is to *cry aloud, to lift up his voice like a trumpet, and shew the people their transgressions, and the house of Israel their sins*, Isa. lviii. 1. Mic. iii. 8. and 2 Cor. v. 16. *it is to know no man after the flesh* when he ascends the pulpit, boldly to reprove vice, how eminent soever the seat of it may be. What is the usual conduct of a minister?—O God! *Enter not into judgment with thy servants, for we cannot answer one* complaint *of a thousand!* Psal. cxliii. 2. Job ix. 3.

3. Consider the multitude in regard to some general *maxims*, which they adopt, and hold as rules and approved axioms. Have you read, in the gospel, the following maxims? Charity begins at home. Youth is a time of pleasure. It is allowable to kill time. We should not pretend to be saints. Slander is the salt of conversation.

ſation. We muſt do as other people do. It is unworthy of a man of honor to put up an affront. A gentleman ought to avenge himſelf. Ambition is the vice of great ſouls. Provided we commit no great crimes, we ſufficiently anſwer our calling. Impurity is an intolerable vice in a woman, but it is pardonable in a man. It would be eaſy to enlarge this catalogue. Which of theſe maxims, pray, doth not ſap ſome of the firſt principles of the religion of Jeſus Chriſt? Yet, which of theſe maxims is not received in ſociety as a fundamental rule of action, which we ſhould be accounted ſingular and petulant to condemn?

4. Conſider the multitude in regard to certain *actions, on which they laviſh praiſe and write encomiums.* We do not mean to ſpeak at preſent of ſuch crimes as the depravity of the world ſometimes celebrates under the notion of heroical actions. Our reflection is of another kind. It is pretty clear, that depravity is general, and piety in the poſſeſſion of a very few, when perſons of ſuperficial knowledge are praiſed for the depth of their underſtanding, and when ſuch as perform very ſmall and inconſiderable actions of virtue, are conſidered as the wonders of the world. Sometimes I hear the world exclaim, what benevolence! What liberality! What generoſity! I inquire for the evidences of theſe virtues, on which ſuch laviſh encomiums are beſtowed; I expect to find another St. Paul, who *wiſhed himſelf accurſed for his brethren*, Rom. ix. 3. I hope to meet with another Moſes, praying to be *blotted out of the book* of life, rather than ſee his nation periſh, Exod. xxxii. 32. But no, this boaſted generoſity and charity is that of a man, who diſtributed to the poor, on one ſolemn occaſion, once in his life, ſuch a ſum of money as he expends every day in prodigality and ſuperfluity. It is that of a man, who beſtows on all the members

bers of Jesus Christ, almost as much as he does on the walls of a room, or the harness of a horse. I hear the world exclaim in some circumstances, what friendship! What tenderness! I inquire for this tender, zealous, generous friend. I expect to find such an original as I have seen described in books, though I have never met with such an one in society. I hope at least to see one example of a friend, saying to a dying man, appoint me your executor, and leave me your children to bring up, and your widow to provide for. But no, I find nothing but the friendship of a man, who, by improving the fortune of another, attracts the chief advantages to himself. I hear the world exclaiming in certain circumstances, what virtue! What purity! What a mother of a family! Again I look for the object of these encomiums. I hope to see such a woman as Solomon imagined, a mother of a family, who makes her house a house of God, and her children patterns of piety. But no, I meet with a woman, who indeed does not defile the nuptial bed, who only doth not outlive her income, and who teaches her children only the little course of domestic economy. All these actions are praise-worthy. All these examples ought to be imitated. But is there any ground for exclaiming as if virtue had been carried to its highest pitch? Are these then such great efforts of religion? Alas! My brethren, complete characters must needs be very scarce in the world, since the world is in raptures on account of these imperfect virtues; there must needs be a great dearth of wise men in the world, since there is so much boasting of one man, who takes only one step in the path of wisdom.

5. Consider mankind in regard to certain *decisive occasions*, which, like touchstones, discover their hearts. We do not know ourselves, we form false ideas of ourselves, when our virtues have

have not been brought to the test. We imagine, we incline to be patient, clement and charitable, in cases where we are not tried, where neither our fortune, nor our reputation, nor our honor, are affected: but the moment a stroke is aimed at any of these, the countenance changes, the brain ferments, the mouth foams, and we breathe nothing but hatred and vengeance. Nothing is more common among us than to talk highly of justice, to detest and censure iniquity, and to engage ourselves inviolably to follow such rules of equity as are marked out in the divine law. Let any man bring an action against us, with reason or without, and all these ideas vanish, we instantly become familiar with the very vices, to which we thought we had an invincible aversion. We disguise our cause, we suppress unfavorable circumstances, we impose on our counsel, we try to take even the judges by surprise, we pretend to make great matters of the importance of our rank, the worth of our names, the credit of our families, the tone of our voices, and all this we wish to incorporate in our cause. A disinterested spirit is always the subject of our utmost admiration and praise. A generous man is the admiration of all mankind, his noble actions unite all hearts, and every man is eager to give such actions their dignity and praise: but no sooner have we a little business to do, in which we have no kind of interest, but disinterestedness appears odious to us, and magnanimity seems to us more proper for a hero of a romance than for a man living and acting in society, and generous actions appear to us mere creatures of imagination. O how little does the multitude deserve consideration in regard to manners!

IV. No more ought they to be imitated in regard to the manner, in which they *quit the world.* Here I foresee, my brethren, you will all side with one another against our doctrine, and that

we shall be obliged to blame both persons and things about dying people; such as are dying, such as surround them, such as visit them; in short, all are in disorder in the case before us. Almost every person that dies is canonized. If the light of christianity had not abolished deification, we should have filled heaven with saints and heroes and deified souls. Each house of mourning echoes with the praises of the dead, none of his looks towards heaven are forgotten, not a sigh, not an ejaculation hath escaped notice. The funeral convoys of persons the most worldly, whose hearts had been the most hardened in sin, are all uttering orations in praise of the dead. For our parts, my brethren, we, who have seen a great number of sick people, and attended many in their dying hours, we freely grant, that the salvation of many of them is probable. We have hardly seen one, whose salvation we quite despair. But how seldom have we been inclined to say, while we saw such people expire uttering the language of the most eminent saints in scripture, *Let us die the death of* these *righteous* people, *and let our last end be like* theirs! Numb. xxiii. 10.—— I will give you a short list of general mistakes on this subject.

The first mistake is this. Most sick people are ingenious to disguise the danger of their illness. *Be not conformed to this world.* Whenever a dangerous illness attacks you, be aware of your condition, and let each say to himself, I have not long to live, at least this may be my last illness. My brethren, this supposition is never unseasonable, we are in little danger of being deceived by thinking death at hand, for the numberless accidents, to which we are exposed, justify the thought —Is there any thing extravagant, pray, in affirming that sickness added to all these accidents renders the near approach of death highly probable?

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The second mistake is this. Most dying people put off the regulation of their temporal affairs too long. *Be not conformed to this world.* You should take patterns from better models, both for reasons of affection, and reasons of prudence. True affection to a family engages a man to preclude in favor of his heirs such troubles and divisions as are the inseparable consequences of an undivided or perplexed estate. Prudence, too, will foresee, that while our minds are all occupied about temporal affairs, a thousand ideas will intrude to disturb our devotion. Do not wait till the last moment to settle your affairs, to make your will, to dispose of your family, and be not so weak as to imagine that the discharge of these necessary duties will hasten your death. Employ yourselves wholly about the state of your souls, and let each say to himself, since I have been in the world I have hardly devoted one whole day to devotion: since I have been a member of the church, I have been exercised about affairs which interest the whole society: but now that I am come to the end of my life, now I am passing out of this world, now that I am going where I shall have no more *portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun*, disturb me no more, ye worldly ideas; thou *fashion of this world passing away*, appear no more in my sight: ye wild *fowls*, interrupt my sacrifice no more.

The third mistake is this. Most dying people delay sending for their ministers till the last moment. They would have us do violence to the laws of nature, they set us to exhort trunks, to instruct carcases, to prepare skin and bones for eternity. *Be not conformed to this world.* Why should ye delay? Is there any thing odious in our ministry? We do not bring death along with us, we do not hasten its approach: if we denounce the judgments of God against you, it is not with a design to terrify you, but to free you

you from them, and to *pull you out of the fire*, Jude 23.

To these I add a fourth mistake. Most dying people think it a duty to tell their pastors of excellent sentiments, which indeed they have not, and they are afraid to discover their defects. When death makes his formidable appearance before them, they think religion requires them to say, they are quite willing to die. We *desire*, say they, *to depart*, when, alas! all their desires are to *make a tabernacle* in the world, for *it is good*, they think, *to be there*. They tremble at the coming of Christ, and yet they cry, *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly*. Ah! *Be not conformed to this world*, open thy heart that it may be known, discover the maladies of thy soul, that we may apply such remedies as are proper. Do not imagine you will acquire such sentiments and emotions as saints of the first order had by talking their language: but imbibe their principles in your mind, and their tempers in your heart, before you make use of their language.

The fifth mistake is this. Most dying people speak to their ministers only in the presence of a great number of attendants, and most attendants interfere in what ministers say on those occasions. *Be not conformed to this world.* Two reasons may convince you of the necessity of being alone. The first regards the pastor. Surrounding attendants divert his attention from the sick person. The second regards the sick person himself. Would it be just or kind to give him directions in public? What! would you have us, in the presence of a husband, lay open the intrigues of an immodest wife, and endeavor to bring her to repent of her lasciviousness by convicting her of her crimes? Would you have us reprove the head of a family for the iniquity that has disgraced his long life, in the presence of his son? Would you have us exhort a dying man

to

to make reſtitution of his ill-gotten wealth, in the preſence of an hungry heir, who already gluts his eyes, and ſatiates his ſoul with hopes of ſucceſſion? Were we caſuiſts after the Roman faſhion, did we compel conſciences to reveal ſecrets to us, which ought to be confeſſed to God alone, did we interfere with your families and properties, there would be ſome ground for your ſcruples: but while we deſire nothing but to exonerate your conſciences, and to awaken your ſouls to a ſenſe of danger, before you be plunged into an abyſs of eternal miſery, reſpect our conduct, and condeſcend to ſubmit to our inſtruction.

To theſe I add one miſtake more. Moſt dying people truſt too much to their miniſters, and take too little pains themſelves to form ſuch diſpoſitions as a dying bed requires. *Be not conformed to this world.* It is not enough to have external help to die well, we ourſelves muſt concur in this great work, we muſt, by profound meditation, by frequent reflections, and by fervent prayers, ſupport ourſelves under this laſt attack, and thus put the laſt hand to the work of our ſalvation. It is true, the infirmities of your bodies will affect your minds, and will often interrupt your religious exerciſes; but no matter, God doth not require of a dying perſon connected meditations, accurate reflections, preciſe and formal prayers, for one ſigh, one tear, one ejaculation of your ſoul to God, one ſerious wiſh riſing from the bottom of your heart will be highly eſteemed by the Lord, and will draw down new favors upon you.

To conclude. The multitude is a bad guide in regard to faith, in regard to manners, and in regard to departing out of this life. A man who deſires to be ſaved, ſhould be always upon his guard, leſt he ſhould be rolled down the torrent: he ought to compile in his cloſet, or rather in his conſcience, a religion apart, ſuch as is, not that

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of the children of the world, but that of the disciples of wisdom. *Be not conformed to this world.*

I finish with two reflections. I address the first to those, who derive from this discourse no consequences to direct their actions: and the second to such as refer it to its true design.

First. I address myself to you who do not draw any consequences from this discourse to regulate your actions. You have seen a portrait of the multitude. I suppose you acknowledge the likeness, and acquiesce in the judgment we have made. It seems, too many proofs and demonstrations establish this proposition, the multitude is a bad guide. Now you may follow which example you please. You may make your choice between the maxims of Jesus Christ and the maxims of the world. But we have a right to require one thing of you, which you cannot refuse us without injustice, that is, that granting the genius of the multitude, when you are told you are destroying yourselves, you do not pretend to have refuted us by replying, we conduct ourselves as the world does, and every body does what you condemn in us. Thanks be to God, your proposition is not strictly true! Thanks be to God, the rule hath some exceptions! There are many regenerate souls, hidden perhaps from the eyes of men, but visible to God. There are even some saints, who shine in the sight of the whole world, and who, to use the expression of Jesus Christ, are a *city set on a hill*, Matt. v. 14. What then, you never cast your eyes on the most illustrious objects in this world! Do you reckon for nothing what alone merits observation in society, and what constitutes the true glory of it? Have you no value for men, for whose sake the world subsists, and society is preserved?

However, your proposition is indisputable in a general

general ſenſe, and we are obliged to allow it, for our whole diſcourſe tends to elucidate and eſtabliſh the point. Alledge this propoſition, but do not alledge it for the purpoſe of oppoſing the cenſures you have heard, or of getting rid of our reproofs. By anſwering in this manner, you give us an advantage over you, you lay a foundation which you mean to deſtroy, you do not furniſh yourſelves with a ſhield againſt your miniſters, but you yourſelves ſupply them with arms to wound and deſtroy you. Why do we declaim againſt your conduct? What do we mean when we reprove your way of living, except to convince you that it is not anſwerable to the chriſtian character which you bear? What do we mean, except that you break the vows made for you in your baptiſm, and which you yourſelves have often ratified at the Lord's table? What, in one word, except that you do not obey the laws of the goſpel? But what can you advance more proper to ſtrengthen the teſtimony, which we bear againſt you, than that which you advance to weaken it, that is, that you live as the world lives.

All the world, ſay you, conduct themſelves as we do, and every body does what you cenſure us for doing. But all the world conduct themſelves badly, all the world violate the ſpirit of religion, all the world attack the maxims of Jeſus Chriſt, all the world run in the broad road of perdition, all the world are deſtroying themſelves, and the apoſtle exhorts us not to take the *world* for an example.

Secondly. I addreſs myſelf to you, who ſincerely deſire to apply this diſcourſe to its true deſign. I grant, the road opened to you is difficult. To reſiſt the torrent, to brave the multitude, to ſee one's ſelf like Elijah *alone* on the Lord's ſide, and, in this general apoſtacy, in which a chriſtian ſo often finds himſelf, when he

deſires

desires to sacrifice all to his duty, to recollect motives of attachment to it, this is one of the noblest efforts of christian heroism.

However, after all, it would argue great puerility to magnify our ideas of the crowd, the many, the multitude; it would be childish to be too much struck with these ideas, every body thinks, in this manner, all the world acts thus. I affirm, that truth and virtue have more partizans than error and vice, and God hath more disciples than Satan. What do you call the crowd, the many, the multitude? What do you mean by all the world? What! You and your companions, your family, your acquaintances, your fellow citizens, the inhabitants of this globe, to which the Creator hath confined you; is this what you call all the world? What littleness of ideas! Cast your eyes on that little mole hill, occupied by a few thousands of ants, lend them intelligence, propose to one of these insects other maxims than those of his fellows, exhort him to have a little more ambition, than to occupy a tiny imperceptible space upon that mole hill; animate him to form projects more noble than that of collecting a few grains of corn, and then put into the mouth of this little emmet the same pretext that you make use of to us; I shall be alone, all the world conduct themselves in another manner. Would you not pity this insect? Would not he appear more contemptible to you for his mean and spiritless ideas, than for the diminutiveness of his body? Would you not look with disdain on an ant, that had no other ambition than that of taking for a model other insects about him, and preferring their approbation before that of mankind, who hold a rank so high in the scale of the world? My brethren, give what colors you will to this imagination, it is however certain, that you would form unjust ideas of this insect. An emmet hath no relation to

those

those beings, which you propose to him for models. Such ideas of happiness as you trace to him have no proportion to his faculties. Is an emmet capable of science, to be allured by the company of the learned? Can an ant form plans of sieges and battles, to render himself sensible of that glory, which exploits of war acquire, and for which the heroes of the world sacrifice their repose and their lives?

It is you, who have that meanness of soul, which you just now pitied in an ant. You inhabit cities and provinces, which, compared with the rest of the world, resemble the size of mole hills; the whole globe itself is nothing in comparison of the immense spaces, in which other works of the Creator are lodged. You creep on earth with a handful of men much less in comparison with the thousand thousands of other intelligences than an ant hill is in comparison of mankind. You have intimate relations to these intelligences; you, like them, are capable of great and noble functions; like them, you are capable of knowledge; like them, you are able to know the Supreme Being; you can love like them; you can form tender and delicate connections as they can; and like them, you are destined to eternal duration and felicity.

Do not say then, I shall be alone, nobody lives as you would have me live. They are the men, who surround you, that are *nobody* in comparison of the intelligences, whom I propose to you for examples. It ill suits insignificant men to consider themselves alone as in the centre of divine benevolence, and as the only subjects of a monarch, who reigneth over all existence. *He sitteth upon the circle of the earth,* whence the *inhabitants* appear to him *as grasshoppers. He bringeth princes to nothing, he considereth the judges of the earth as vanity. He shall blow upon them and they shall wither, and the whirl-*

wind shall take them away like stubble, Isa. xl. 22.

But ye, celestial intelligences, seraphims burning with love, angels mighty in strength, messengers of the divine will, spirits rapid as the wind, and penetrating as fire, ye *redeemed of all nations, all kindred, all people, all tongues*, Rev. v. 9. ye make the crowd, ye fill the court of the sovereign of the world; and, when we refuse to conform ourselves to this world, we imitate you; and when the slaves of the world shall be loaded with chains of darkness, we shall share with you the *river of pleasures*, at the right hand of that God, whom you serve, and to whose service we, like you, devote ourselves. God grant us this grace! To him be honor and glory for ever. Amen.

FINIS.